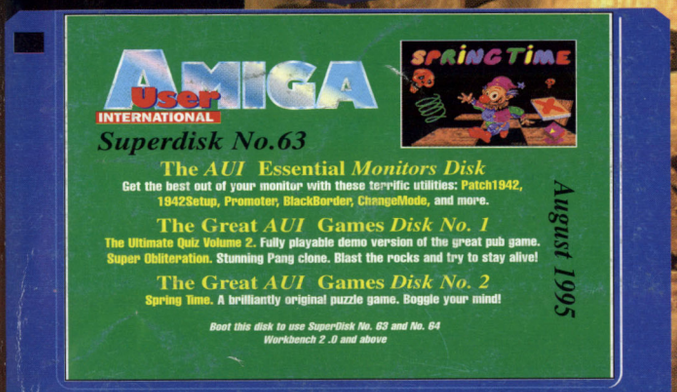
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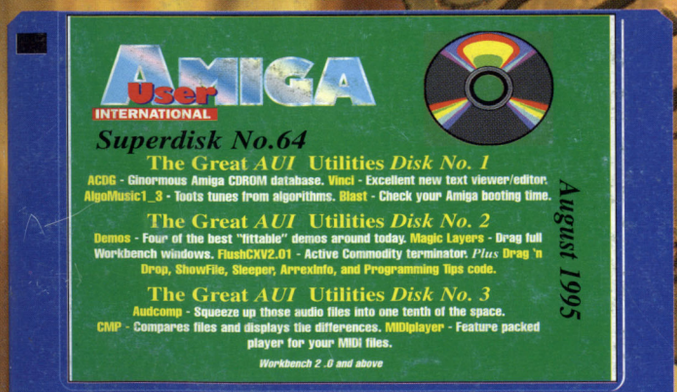
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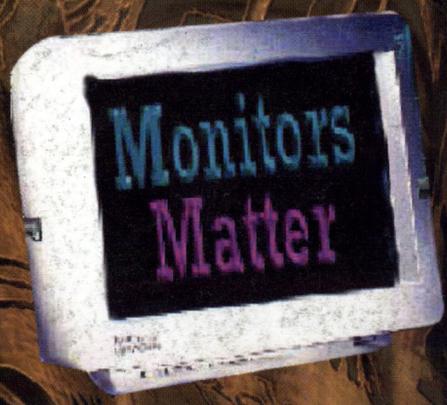
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The Men from ESCOM

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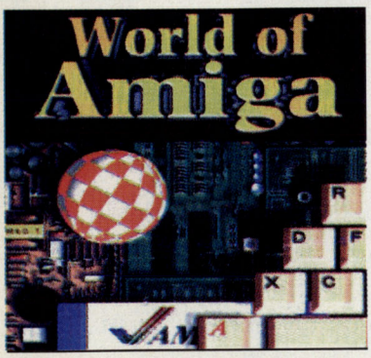
AMIGA User INTERNATIONAL

CONSTANT FACTORS

5 The Amiga Dimension
Managing Editor Antony Jacobson and Mark Blackham join the NewsFile team to investigate the past, present and possible future of the new kids on the Amiga block, The Men from ESCOM.



8 SuperDisks No.63 and No.64
Gideon Overhead has sweated blood to locate the best utilities and games you'll find this side of the black stump (and there's nowt on the other side - he checked). Six disks of wonder packed onto to just two.



16 NewsFile
In-depth investigations, superficial judgements, bright developments, stupid ideas, Anthony Mael and Martin Witton crawl actoss the fetid underbelly of the technobarmy world and return with a customised collection of curios.

Cover picture created by Conal Wenn of Image Nation

70 Online - The Internet Column
Gary Fenton staggers bewildered around the Internet show and gets twitchy at the prospect of crass exploitation of the hackers' borderless cyberspace.

88 Amiga Answers
Even after years of reading *AUI*, there's a few things you probably don't know. Ask Andy Eskelton - everyone else does and they get the info they need.

98 The PD Stakeout
AUI pays its monthly visit to the PD clinic. This month Dr Mark Blackham exposes infectious demos and healthy utilities, and gives a Pheobe Cates look- alike a clean bill of health.

110 Write to Reply.
You write, Bud Vennos replies. You wrong, Bud Vennos sighs, then releases a stream of well-deserved invective, abuse and biting criticism and, of course, the occasional applause. Well, you had to write, didn't you?

TEST DRIVE

32 SCALA MM400
An update to the famous SCALA multimedia presentation tool is test driven by Gary Fenton, finding some exceptional features, and a few that are noticable by their absence.

34 OS3.1
AUI answers the questions posed by many readers with an exclusive investigation by Mark Blackham and Gideon Overhead into the 3.1 version of the Amiga operating system being marketed by Village Tronic. Is it worth the upgrade?

36 Final Data
An upgrade of the Final Data database, sternly judged by *AUI* a few months ago, has appeared to a warm welcome from Mark Blackham, who reports that his testing shows Final Data is finally an impressive program.

38 Deluxe Paint V
The fifth incarnation of the famous Amiga painting program, DPaint, is hoping to recapture the magic of its early years. Gary Fenton dips his paint brush into the EA palette and creates a picture of mixed feelings.



40 Caviar Drive
Guaranteed to set the pulse racing on any computer owner. The dream of having a gigabyte hard-drive purring inside your Amiga is now a reality. Gideon Overhead explores what it's like to have something BIG from Western Digital inside your Amiga.

42 Power On Top
The ingenious developers at Hi-Q have come up with another winning product for CD32 and SX-1 owners. Gideon Overhead tests drives the SX-1 PowerStation, a beefed-up power supply and hard-drive combination.

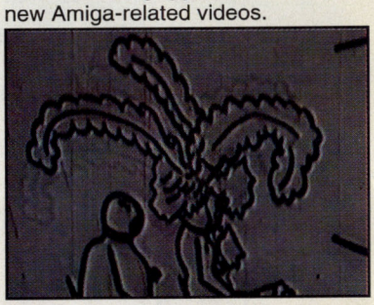
44 Creating Space
Mark Blackham pushes a pile of junk off his desk to clear the way for two new products designed to make your Amiga workplace more efficient - the Combi Centre from Premier, and Eco Disk Boxes from Flat Earth.

46 Like Greased Lightning
A fan cooled 060 processor forms the heart of Cyberstorm, a new accelerator for big-box Amigas. Gary Fenton feels the throbbing power of an Amiga running over four times faster than the standard 4000/040!

50 Photogenics
Almathera's outstanding graphics program gets an upgrade. Gary Fenton test drives its added powerful features.

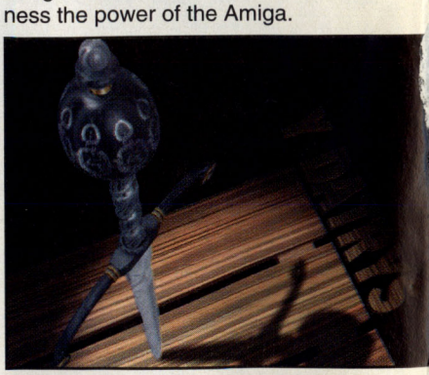
52 Discology
Mark Blackham tests the program others won't tell you about. Here's a hardware/software combination for copying protected software - for backups of your legitimately owned material, of course.

86 Video RoundUp
The Amiga starring in a blue-movie? No such luck for Michael Rumbelow who watched, goggle-eyed, a range of new Amiga-related videos.



USER PORT

68 Conal Colour
Conal Wenn, a top-notch video graphics designer, shows off his Amiga-based commercial work. Witness the power of the Amiga.



MENTOR

72 Programming Tips
Take down some notes on the ASL library and Paul Overaa's astute and cute runable code.

73 AREXX Info
An AREXX code in the hand is worth two in the nest... or something like that. Paul Overaa explains nested routines.

ENTERTAINMENT NOW

80 Games obsessives with Amigas are in trouble - there's precious little new material around. Mark Blackham went in search of an entertainment fix and found F1 World Championship Edition, Gloom, International Golf and ViroCop. So he reviewed them all.



AUI Services

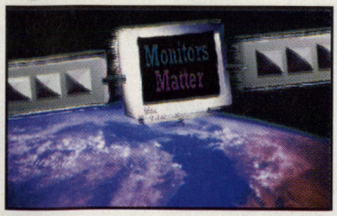
107 Arena
The *AUI* Arena is where the best Amiga merchants pose, preen and compete for your attention and favour. Take a gander and give the thumbs up to these proud Amiga gladiators.

95/97 *AUI* Special Offers
Two more special offers chosen to help make your life with the Amiga even bettter.

111 Advertisers Index
Don't you hate it when you flick fruitlessly through pages searching for that advertisement you'd swear you saw selling an essential widget.

SPECIAL REPORTS

57 The Eyes Have It



Monitors matter.. You stare at them for hours on end, yet probably give little thought to how they could be affecting your health. *AUI* assembled its sharp-eyed technical investigation team - with John Taylor and Gideon Overhead as chief visionaries - to gaze at the latest developments in monitor technology, including looking closely at PC monitors for the Amiga.

74 10 Years of the Amiga
Sheer Entertainment
We finish our long-lasting look at an eventful past ten years of the Amiga with a recap of the favourite and most influential games. Mark Blackham and Mike Nelson reminisce about the progress of the Amiga as a platform for sheer entertainment.



82 Chips Away!
The second part of *AUI*'s Special Report on microprocessors reports on the RISC family. With some pointers to the Amiga's RISC chip future.

The New Amiga Dimension!

Antony Jacobson and Mark Blackham join the NewsFile team in investigating

The Men from ESCOM

Slouch hat, buckle-tied trench coat, parodying the footsteps of the Private 'Tec sauntering gutsily down the mean streets, the Man from ESCOM's shadowy figure leads us... no, not through a corpse-filled mystery but into a £6 million advertising campaign designed to put the ESCOM name on the UK computer buying public's map. From the smiles on the faces of the real men from ESCOM - a multinational variety of talents who have ridden into the European techno field more like a Clint Eastwood gang than a solo Humphrey Bogart - that raid on the previously ploddalong UK High Street electronic scene has been highly successful. The Men from ESCOM had carried out, from Holland and Germany, an audacious snatch of the dilapidated Rumbelow's chain of shops spread around Britain and in a few weeks turned them into swish PC stores that took £2.6 million on the first Saturday after the campaign was launched.

Simultaneously, the smart-suited Men from ESCOM swept across the Atlantic and in an eyeball to eyeball auction battle took on the might of one of the world's most powerful computer companies, Dell, and strong-armed them out of the way to grab up the shattered remains of the once global Commodore empire. In programming terms, you could say they went straight for the metal, for in those two quick and dirty moves the men from ESCOM forced their relatively unknown company up into the big league of world contenders, the names to note for the electronic future.

Ironically, at the same time, they also confirmed a reality that had long been true but that had never actually been admitted. That the Amiga, and even Commodore itself, had deserted its origins in the USA and become completely European.

This fact is not one that is emphasised by the new kids on the computer block. The Men from ESCOM see themselves as recreating a potentially global empire with hundreds of stores in Europe, manufacturing in the Pacific Rim and even plans to take the Amiga back into the USA through licensing to a range of other companies who want the low price, high quality multimedia facilities that the Amiga can offer.

You may have noticed that it is no longer, as in the past, Commodore's Amiga. It is Commodore and the Amiga. Two entirely separate entities. It's ESCOM's Commodore and it's ESCOM's Amiga - or to be precise, Amiga Technologies GMBH, the name of the company that now will be responsible for the future of our beloved computer.

To understand what the Men from ESCOM intend you have to go back in time and try to comprehend how their psychology was formed. The company is led by Manfred Schmitt - not Schmidt, as most magazines including *AUI* managed to spell it last month. But Amiga Technologies is headed up by Bernard van Tienen. The history of these two men is founded in an interesting association with Commodore.

Manfred Schmitt, ten years ago, owned just a single musical instrument shop. He recognised that more and more demand was coming for electronics in the musical instrument field. So he went out and found a computer that could be combined with a keyboard and started to sell it. But his customers already had keyboards and wanted just to buy the computer. That computer was a Commodore C64. Being someone who wanted to make his customers happy, Manfred Schmitt sold them computers. and sold them computers and sold them computers. In a year, he had opened ten shops. A decade later ESCOM has about 400 shops and is one of the two largest chains in Germany, with computer stores in Holland, Belgium, and other European countries including the ex-Eastern Block countries. Even before the Rumbelow take over, Schmitt's ambitions had brought ESCOM some 20 stores in the UK where they could try out their formula. They were successful enough to convince the electronics entrepreneur that the UK potential was there for the taking.

Bernard van Tienen, the Man from ESCOM now in the Amiga driving seat, has a different background. A longtime Commodore employee he rose during the glory days in Europe when the Commodore PC was a powerful brand in the business market and the Amiga achieved prominence as the continent's most successful home computer. As Vice President, van Tienen was a leading figure in that exciting period.

It should be remembered that Commodore launched PCs before the Amiga. By the time the Amiga took off, the Commodore PC was very well established in the biggest PC market in Europe - west Germany. It rose to be by 1990, the second in the sales of PCs, following only the then leader, IBM. Commodore Germany

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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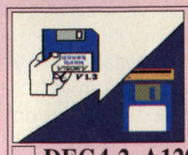
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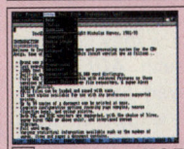


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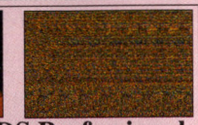


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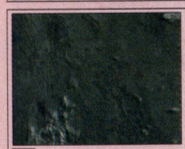
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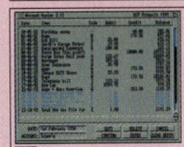


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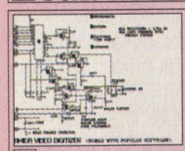
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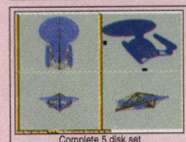
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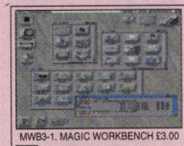


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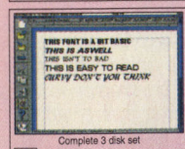
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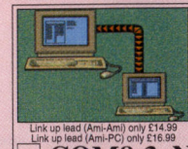
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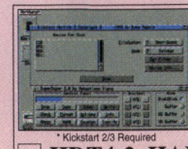


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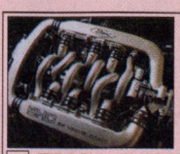
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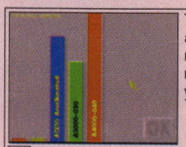
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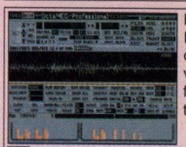


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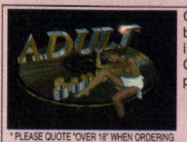
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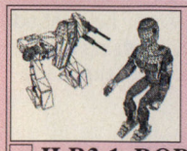


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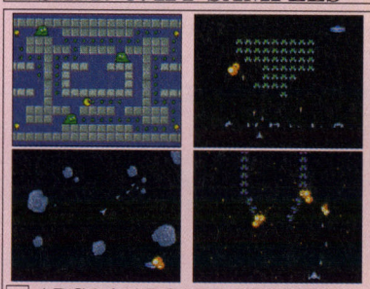


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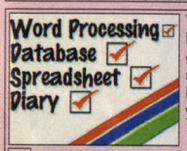


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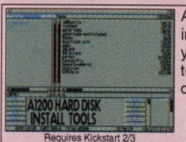
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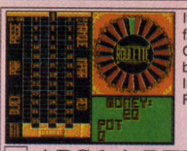


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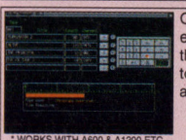


If you've just purchased your Amiga you may be a bit boggled how to use it properly. Well this five disk set takes you step by step through every basic thing to know.

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* Suitable for use on all Amigas

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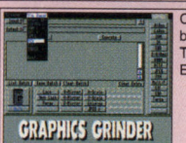


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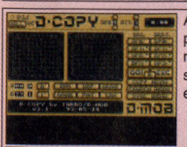


Whether you're a complete beginner at chess or a champion, JI CHESS has something for you. Superb graphics and speech make this a great software title.

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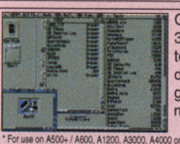
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A compilation of very powerful disk copiers, make backups of your software collection with ease.

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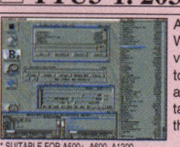
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* SUITABLE FOR A500+, A600, A1200

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A collection of great fun educational games for children under 7. Maths, spelling, speed, etc. are all included in this excellent compilation.

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☐ **EDU9-4. EDUCATIONAL**



Tetris is the most addictive game in the world, and that's a fact. This is a compilation of five of the best. Best graphics, best sound and best playability.

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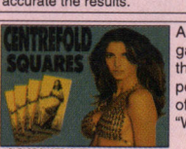
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A range of clipart for use with Pagesetter. Dozens of subjects including: People, Vehicles, Animals, Computers, Sport etc, etc.

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Another great puzzle game for adults. A pint of the best, a packet of peanuts and a good game of Centrefold Squares. "What a life!"

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Stop other people from accessing your floppy or hard disks, by putting a customised password on your disk. Also contains file encryption tools.

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AMIGA User INTERNATIONAL

Another month, another twin pair of disks full of wonderful Amiga wares. Gideon Overhead provides the guidance to *AUI's* exciting August offerings.

Instructions

Despite the amount of data packed in, installation is as usual a breeze. For floppy installation, you'll need six - yes, that's right, six - spare disks. But they can be installed directly onto your hard drive if you have one. However, Spring Time (***AUI***AUG95c) must be installed onto a floppy disk as it needs to boot from there.

Simply boot SuperDisk No. 63 and select the disk you wish to install. Follow the on screen instructions. Each disk takes around five minutes to install to floppy using a basic A600 with 1 Meg of RAM. On a faster machine it should take considerably less time.

See the Additional Information box on page 14 for more instructions.

AUIAUG95a

The AUI Essential Monitors Disk

We have had many requests from readers who have had problems setting up their monitors. On this comprehensive disk, we give you a selection of utilities which should make the process of monitor tweaking that much easier.

We must stress that adjusting the scan rate settings of a monitor outside of its design specification could damage it. You have been warned. If you are replacing any of your Workbench files with files from any of the following programs then you are strongly advised to make copies of the originals before proceeding.

1942PatchAGA

These patches are replacement tool types for 194x monitors. They fix a few problems that there are switching between certain modes when using this type of monitor. You should not now have to keep adjusting the monitor controls every time you switch between Super72, DblPAL, DblNTSC, NTSC, and Multiscan.

1942Setup

This set-up program updates Release 3 of the Amiga operating system to ensure maximum performance from the 1940 and 1942 monitors. It will update the following monitor files in Devs/Monitors (or Storage/Monitors):

DblNTSC
DblPAL
Euro36
Euro72
Multiscan
NTSC
PAL
VGAOnly

In addition, the Overscan Preferences editor is also updated. The "Edit Size" and "Edit Graphics Size" screens now have an arrow gadget which allows you to shift the display area up, down, right and left to centre it.

Promoter

Promoter is a very complex program. The document file is twice the size of the executable! It allows you to change almost any feature of any screen. A useful utility indeed. If you are going to use this program we strongly suggest you read the document thoroughly beforehand.

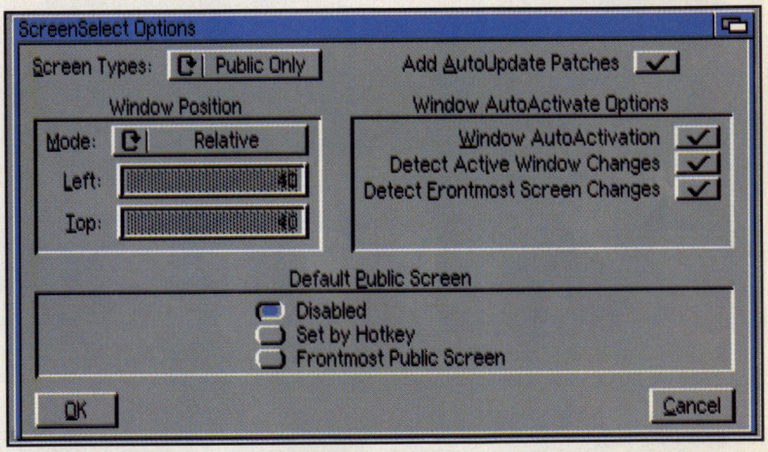
BlackBorder

This is a little tool that puts a black border around the extreme edge of the screen. This is helpful for users with an A3000 who would have probably noticed a small flickering line right at the top of their screen. This is caused by the built in de-interlace chip. The black border which this program creates makes this line invisible.

ScreenSelect

If you have several applications running on Public Screens you will know how annoying it can be (depending on the temperament of the user) to have to get the right screen that you want to use.

Previously the only way was to cycle through the screens with left-Amiga-m. ScreenSelect allows you to assign certain key combinations to Public Screens. For example, you are using Protext and want to flip to the Workbench screen. You can assign the key F1 to get you there. Now screens are only a key press away.



Assign keys to your screens.

WindowDaemon

WindowDaemon gives you more control over Intuition and screens. Here are the main features:

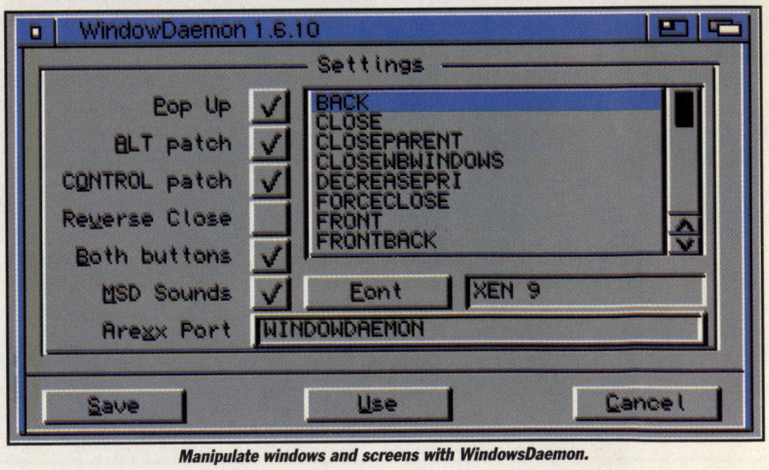
1. Windows and screens can be manipulated by several ARexx commands.

2. The active window may be pushed to the front or back by pressing the left and right mouse buttons simultaneously.

3. If you hold down the control key while opening a drawer within another window, the original window will close as the new one opens.

Changemode

Changemode can be used for any ILBM picture or animation. It allows the user to change the display mode of the picture. It may be used from the CLI or Workbench.



Manipulate windows and screens with WindowsDaemon.

SuperDisks No.63 & No.64

AUIAUG95b

The AUI Great Games Disk No.1

The Ultimate Quiz Volume 2

Andy Gibson, the author who brought out the original Ultimate Quiz, is back with version 2. I have always found



How many can you answer?

quiz games very addictive and we are sure you will too.

This version contains 50 pop music questions. The full game which comes on two disks can be obtained from F1 Licenceware. The address is in the PD Stakeout section in this ***AUI***.

Super Obliteration

I was really impressed by this game which is a mixture of several others. The first is Pang in which you have to destroy round spheres with a grappling hook. These then break into smaller spheres. When they are all destroyed you move onto the next level.

You don't have a grappling hook in this game though. Instead you have a gun and the character you play looks identical to that in the commercial game Turrican.

Super Obliteration is great fun to play and there are plenty of power ups to keep the gameplay interesting.

AUIAUG95c

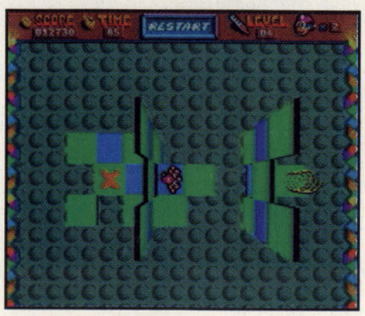
The AUI Great Games Disk No.2

Spring Time

The whole ***AUI*** team was addicted to this game, first reviewed last month in the PD Stakeout when it received 96%. We were so impressed we decided to include it on this month's SuperDisks. It is a simple game in principle but requires an increasing amount of brain power to work out how to complete each consecutive level.

Upon starting the game you will be presented with an overhead view of the puzzle which is in 3D. You will notice the excellent perspective as you move from the left to the right of the screen.

To complete the level the idea is to place the spring onto the cross. To do

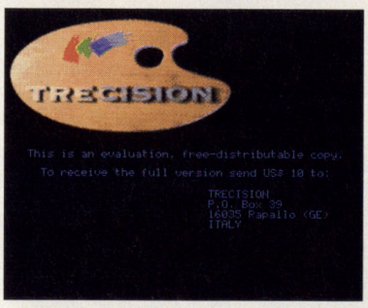




Spring Time, a very addictive original puzzle game.

this you must walk across the level rotating the floor which will pivot as you move.

On one level there will lie the spring and on the other there will be a cross. The idea is to get the spring to come into contact with the cross.



If you want to register the game, here is the information.

What makes this so difficult is not knowing which bit of the level will move when you walk on it. The last thing you want is for the spring to end up on the underside of the level where it will fall off and you will lose a life. This happens a great deal and you will have to learn how the levels work to succeed. There are 20 levels included in this demo version. The registered game has many more.

Spring Time must be installed onto floppy disk and if you select hard disk it will fail, so don't!

When the game has loaded you will be presented with a blank screen. Press the joystick button to start.

AUIAUG95d

The Great AUI Utilities Disk No.1

ACDG

ACDG stands for Amiga CDROM Guide. It contains a full list of CD-ROMs that are compatible with one or all Amiga computers. It gives you details on each CD (if available). There is also a list of publishers and their addresses.

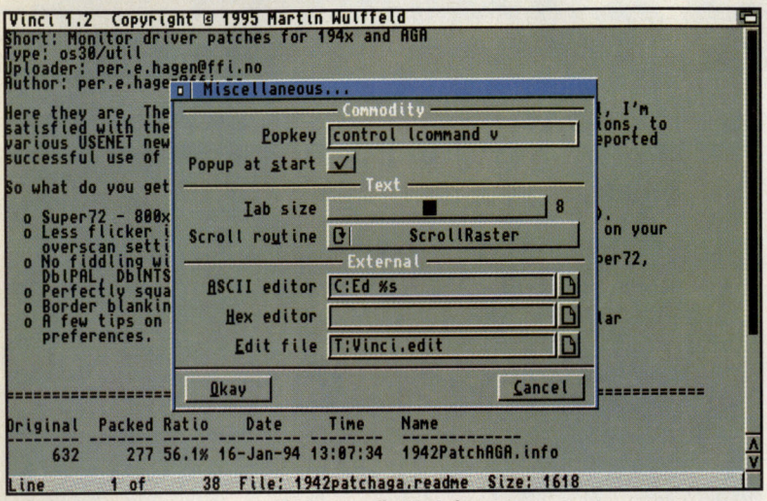
This version contains 128 Amiga CDROMs. This version does not include any commercial CD32/CDTV games, just PD CDs. It is in AmigaGuide format and is therefore is easy to find your way around and get to specific points.

Vinci

Vinci is a very good text viewer. It has many features which other do not..

→

SuperDisks No.61 & No.62



Vinci, an excellent text viewer.

These include being able to launch an external editor so you can edit the file you are viewing. You can select a file from an Lha archive and view it without having to extract the whole archive.

There are many more features but the document is the best place to find them explained. This is a very neat and well programmed viewer.

Blast

Blast is a simple utility which puts up a "title bar" in the screen which displays the last date/time that you booted your Amiga (from the disk on which Blast is located).

The "title bar" will be displayed for approximately 30 seconds. Blast would be useful if you wanted to find out if anybody had been using your computer, that is if you noted down the last time you booted your Amiga! It keeps a useful record even if you are the only one who uses your Amiga.

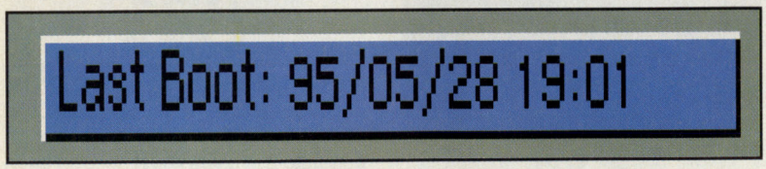
AUIAUG95e

The Great AUI Utilities Disk No.2

Drag n Drop

Drag n Drop is a utility which will place an icon (AppIcon) on the Workbench screen. Once it has been set up correctly, any file dragged on this icon will cause Drag n Drop to perform some pre-programmed task.

For example, if you have a JPG picture you want to view, you can set up Drag n Drop to run a picture viewer and display it each time that particular file is dragged to the Drag n Drop icon. The same icon can be configured to



Mmm, did I really boot my Amiga that long ago?

AlgoMusic1_3

If you have a large collection of sound modules but are tired of listening to the same ones all the time then AlgoMusic is for you. It is a program which creates and plays a song randomly out of a series of algorithms. If you listen carefully each tune is subtly different but there is a pattern.

However, if you get bored with that pattern you can alter the way the tunes are played, the tempo, volume, and even if you want the tune to sound like Acid music!

Magic Layers

There are operating systems which allow the realtime movement of windows on any screen with any depth. These are using quite powerful O/Ss such as Windows NT and the Acorn RISC O/S.

However, you too can have this feature with Magic Layers. This program plays some tricks with Intuition and allows liquid smooth window dragging even in Super Hi-res Lace.

You can argue whether Magic Layers is really that important a utility and a lot of people may say no. But I think it is a good demo to show the owners of Windows NT who might well have thought this couldn't be done on an Amiga.

Sleeper

Last month we included Hdoff which switched off IDE hard drives after a certain amount of time. This saved on the wear of the hard drive and cut down on the heat produced. Sleeper does exactly the same thing but this time for SCSI drives.

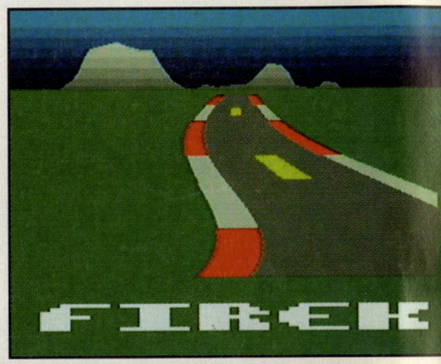
FlushCXV2.01

If you find that you are running out of memory when you are using your Amiga this could be that you have many commodities running in the background. FlushCX kills them and therefore releases the memory which can be used again.

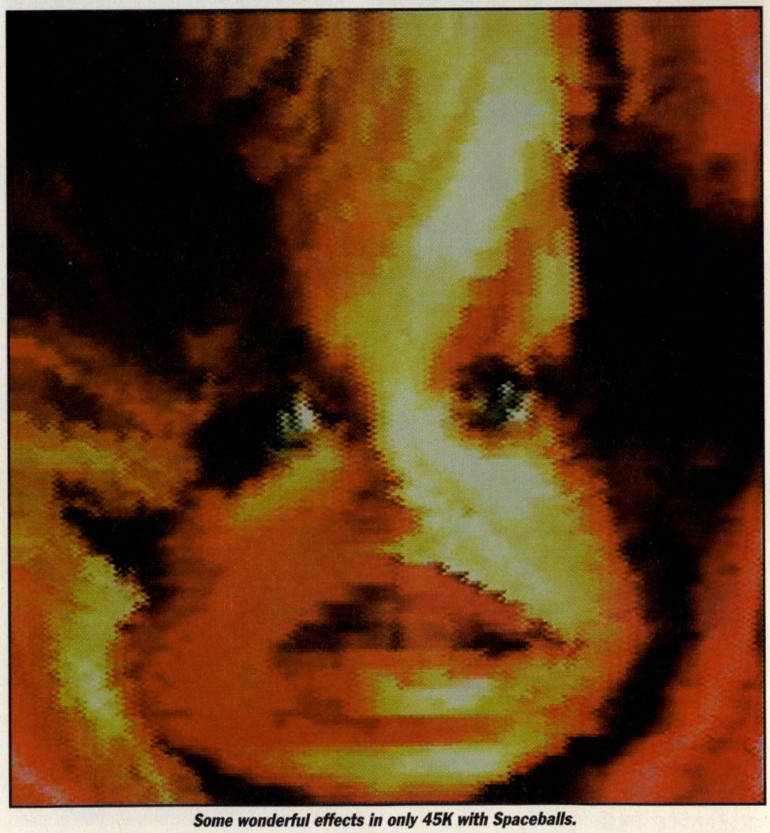
If you find you only want to eliminate certain commodities but leave others running, FlushCX can do this too. It does it by reading a Preferences file in which you specify which programs you want it to leave alone.

ShowFile

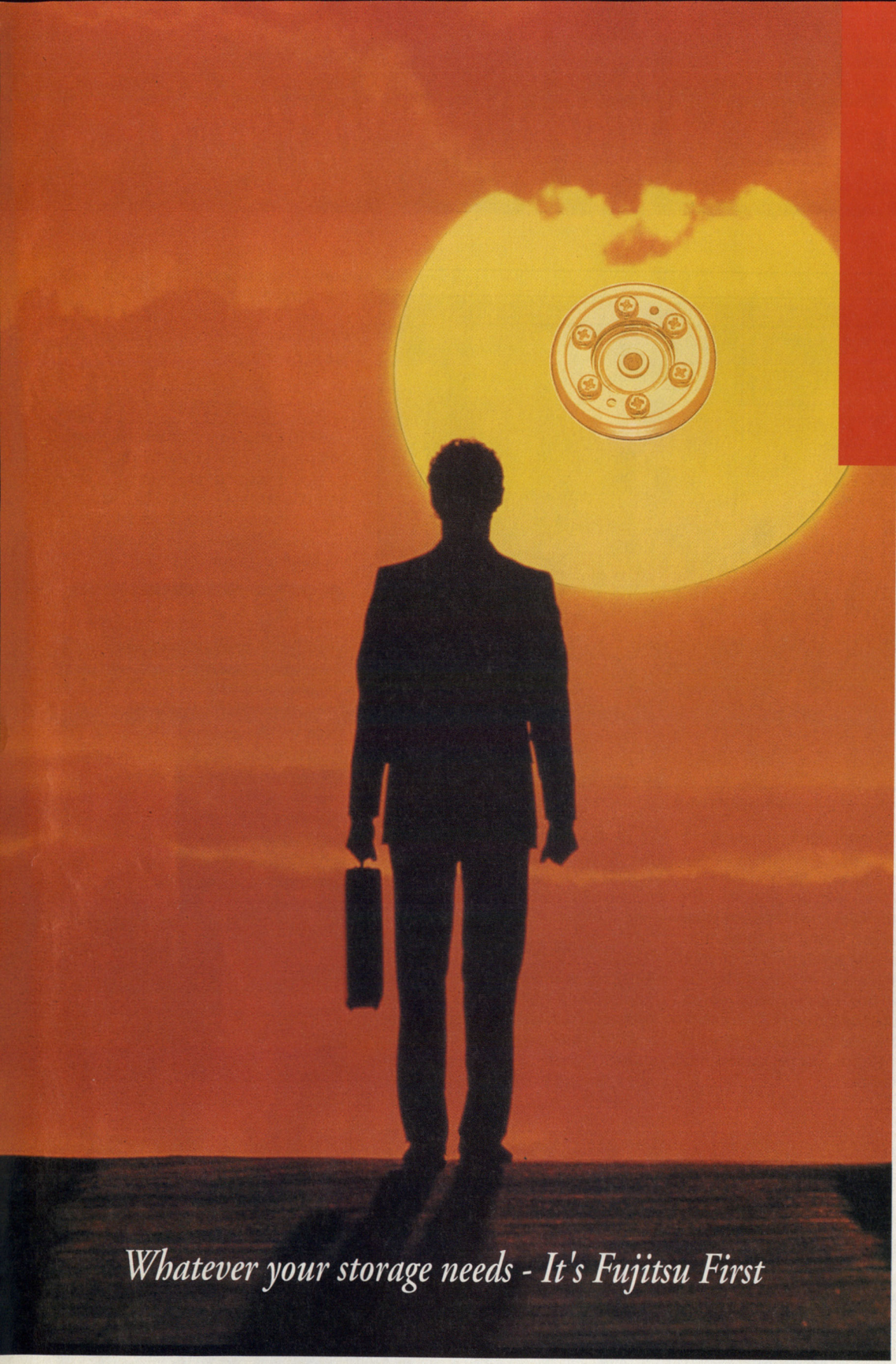
This excellent util replaces the CLI commands Dir and List. It was written by Imdad Shah, the author of the program Drag n Drop, and likewise uses the Showfile Library. This contains information on 111 different filetypes. When the executable is run it will tell you which type each file is.



A demo in only 4K. Impossible? See for yourself!



Some wonderful effects in only 45K with Spaceballs.



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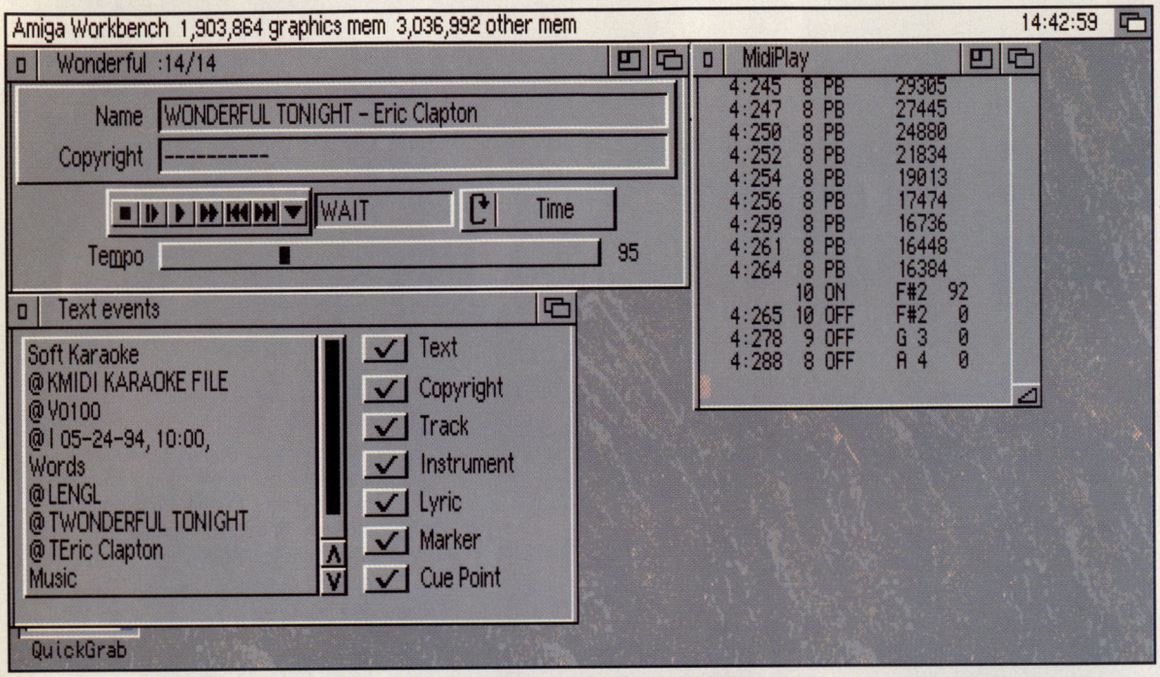
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SuperDisks No.63 & No. 64



La La La. Sing along with all your favourite MIDI files.

Demos

I don't think we have included flashy demos on the ***AUI*** Coverdisk before. The main reason was in the early days of demo writing the file sizes were very big. Today it seems that the aim is to make them as small as possible.

The first demo, Spaceballs is only 45K and contains some excellent video effects. Look out for The Flumps!

The Last Finger, the second demo, will take a couple of seconds to start and also contains some colourful effects. It includes a tiny amount of bad language, you have been warned.

Complex contains a good soundtrack and vector effects and is non-AGA. The last demo, Hoaxers is only 4K in size! It is amazing what you can cram into such a small space. All these demos will return you to the Workbench screen when they have finished, usually by you pressing the left mouse button.

AUIAUG95f

The Great AUI Utilities Disk No. 2

AUDComp

There are many programs available to compress executable files, but audio samples do not compress very well with any of them. AudComp compresses IFF 8SVX files up to ten times. Wow, a breakthrough you may think! Not exactly, because there is quality loss, quite a bit actually.

This is not a good program with which to store your favourite samples. It is, however, useful if you want to send someone a rough idea of your sound sample in a very small file. It is impressive how much is compressed and it works best on samples containing speech. You could use it to send audio samples of your voice to friends on the Internet.

AudComp is run from the CLI and the archive contains two versions. The first is for the 68000 and the second is for the 68020+/68881.

MIDIplay

MIDIplay is a program that can play format 0 and 1 MIDI files. It has many features which include a graphical user interface that lets you play MIDI files easily, General MIDI support, bank changes and external tones files support, ARexx support, MIDI merge, and many more.

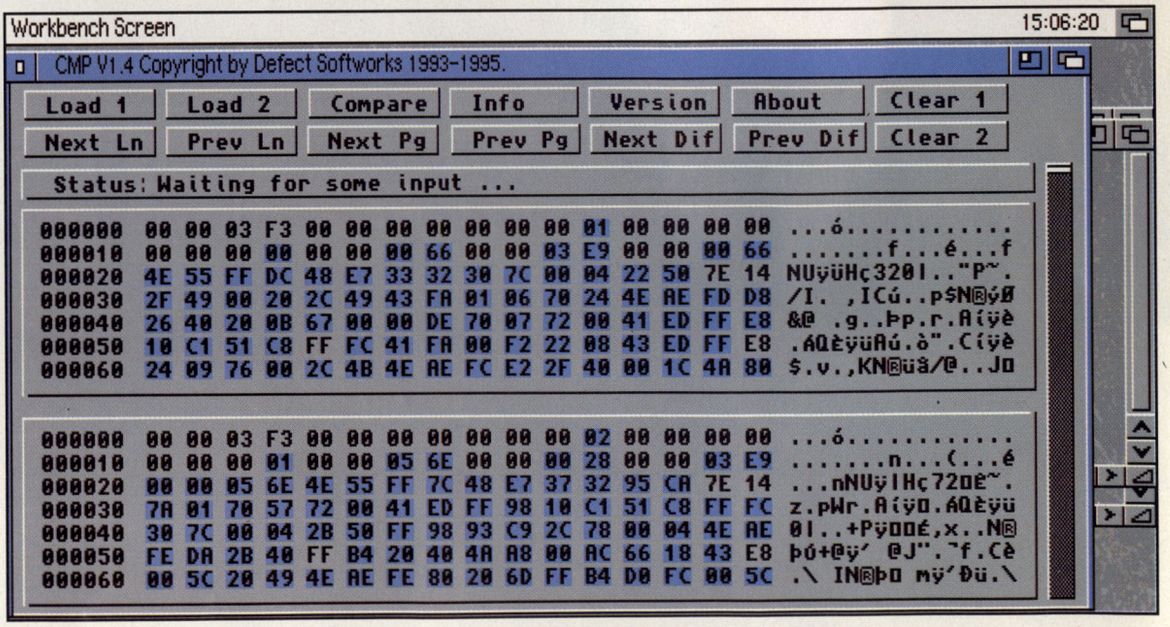
You will, of course, need a MIDI interface and some sort of sound module to hear them.

CMP

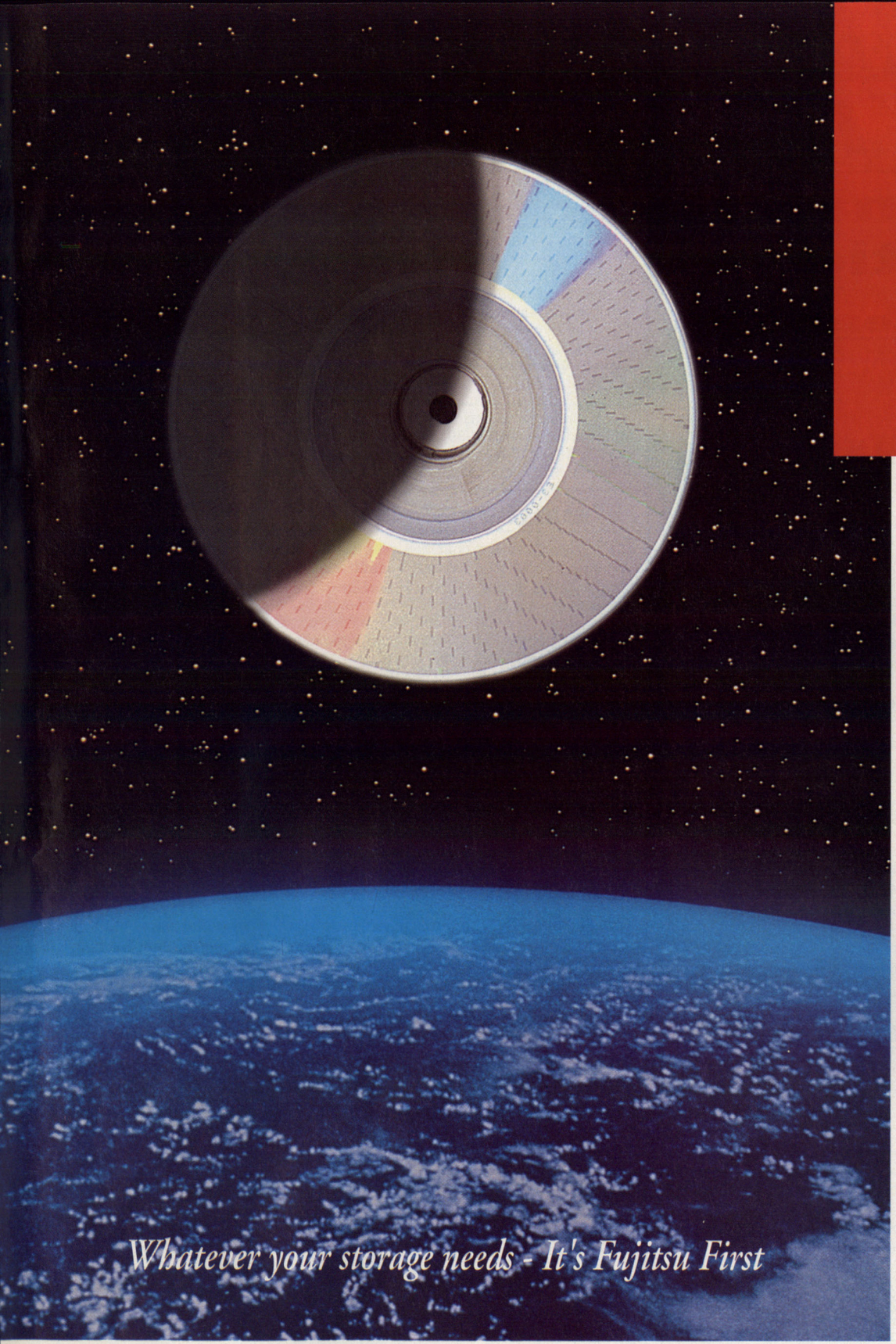
CMP is a program that allows you to compare the contents of two files side by side. Files are loaded into the program via an easy-to-use GUI and once there can be viewed. Both HEX and binary are displayed, which will come in useful for programmers.

NO SUPERDISK?

Consult your Newsagent! We cannot be responsible for what happens at the end of a very long chain of different organisations, especially those outside of the country. So what we propose is simple: if you live in the UK, consult your newsagent as usual. If you are outside the UK, then we'll try our best to help you get the advantages of the SuperDisks. If you don't receive them on the cover, then send us £2 in sterling (International Money Order, etc) to cover postage, plus the bar code – the little box of lines that is printed on the cover and we'll get that month's disk to you ASAP. Okay?



View and compare files in CMP.



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DISK INFORMATION

Additional Information

Floppy Users

You can install to any disk except this month's SuperDisks. When prompted, insert your spare disk into df0:, the internal drive. The time taken to install a disk varies.

Hard Drive Users

Now you can install directly to your hard drive. Boot SuperDisk No.63 as you do for floppy installation, and select the disk you wish to install. When asked whether you wish to install to floppy or hard drive, select 'h'. You will be given a list of available devices and the space on them. Bear in mind that over 4 and a half Megs of space are required to install the whole set of disks.

The SuperDisks will install an exact copy of the floppy disk, **AUI**AUG95x, to a subdirectory of that name. This includes startup-sequences et al. Delete any unnecessary files. Note also that the icon information default tool in the documents will need changing or the reader 'least' will need copying from the c directory in the subdirectory to the c directory on the partition you have installed to (not necessarily sys:c directory).

You cannot install to any path that contains the following letter sequence: "df", "pc", "ds", "ram", "cd". This is to avoid any confusion with other Amiga devices. It is not a good idea to have partitions/directories called this anyway.

Expert Users

The installation directly to hard drive should mean that manual installation would take you longer now. It therefore seems little point detailing this. Should you wish to, remember that SuperDisk No.64 is a diskspare disk and requires this device to read them and that the commands are stored in superdisk63:c/commands.lzx. The SuperDisk scripts are available on August Superdisk for you to use and it would be best to install that disk in the normal way first so that you can see where duplicate files are used.

Viruses

During the production of our coverdisks the disks were constantly checked for quality. While disks are checked for viruses, it is always safer to virus check the disk prior to installation.

Shutters

Prior to installation you should check the shutter of the disk to ensure that it has not been damaged in transit. This is best done by gently sliding the shutter to the left and allowing it to spring back. Please note that ***AUI*** nor Publisher cannot be deemed liable for any problems arising from use of the disk.

Technical Support

Ring our duplicator's technical support line on 0891 715929 (weekdays 10.00am - 12.30pm, 1.30pm - 4.40pm). They may be able to offer useful advice. Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times. Please ensure you have the permission of the phone owner before making the call.

Disk Return

In the unlikely event your disk is damaged or simply doesn't run, please return it to the duplicator, Tib PLc, Tib House, 11 Edward Street, Bradford, BD4 7BH, (who may be contacted on 01274 736990) together with a stamped addressed envelope. Where it is a duplication fault, the postage will be returned along with the replacement disk.

A Plea

We have gone to every effort to make the SuperDisk easy to use and to ensure that all the programs work on as many systems as possible.

We regret that we cannot take any telephone calls concerning SuperDisk problems. They are just too time consuming and then we wouldn't have time to put the next SuperDisk together for you.

If you do have a problem, try the docs again and refer to your manual, should you need to move any libraries or assign any programs. If you are truly stuck, please write to Amiga Answers.

BBSs

Much Gratitude to Jimbob, the supportive Sysop of the excellent Waltons' Mountain BBS, on 0181 891 5730. Faulty Towers shouldn't be omitted, available on 01235 535113. If you want to be truly international, then check out the splendid American BBS Smorgasboard, on 205 745 3989.

Readers' Contributions

AUI's SuperDisks are crammed with the cream of Amiga crop. Many of the programs are created especially for us and released into the Public Domain through ***AUI***. It's you the reader that makes it possible for ***AUI*** to continue to share top quality software with tens of thousands of avid Amiga users.

If you have a masterpiece that you think can cut it with the best, send it to: SuperDisk Contributions, Amiga User International Magazine, Building 3, 203 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BW.

It's best for us if you don't use Powerpacker, because we use LZX to archive, which is far more efficient. It will also help if you tell us which libraries or fonts your program requires, keeping them to a minimum if possible. So, if you're sending an AMOS program for example, try to avoid the need to have the AMOS library separately. These guidelines make life jolly for everyone.

Happy compiling!

Shareware

Just a brief reminder that some of the programs on our Coverdisk are Shareware. This means that you can try them out, but if you regularly use them you should send a registration fee to the author. Registration fees are between £5 and £20 and sometimes the author will send you the latest version in return. You can send an International Money Order, or preferably a cheque but many authors don't accept cheques if they are outside the UK. If you want to risk sending cash in a registered post, it's up to you. We wouldn't advise it but it's your money...

Note that some of the authors don't want anything more than a postcard from you so they can see how far their programs have travelled. So, why not make their day. After all, they made yours.

Compatibility

These SuperDisks are WorkBench 2 and above only and require one Meg of Chip RAM or more. We deem this to be the minimum spec Amiga used nowadays. That doesn't mean that we aren't aware of users with 1.3 Amigas. The reason is simply that most new programs, certainly those developed by PD programmers, require WorkBench 2 and because it allows us to give about a further 300-400K of data. Getting over four Megs onto two disks isn't possible with OFS disks and decrunching them would require more floppy disks on your part. WorkBench 2 gives much more than a new WorkBench disk, it powers up your Amiga, radically renovating your Operating System. The only option for 1.3 users is to upgrade. The cost is negligible (c.£50), and is more than worth it for the wealth of new programs on offer and for the money you'll save on floppy disks!

All the programs on these disks work on an A1200 and most on an Amiga 500+. The best way to check is to read the docs and try the game. Should you require additional libraries for the program, they should be enclosed in the program directory and you need to copy them to your libs:directory on your WorkBench disk.

Read your WorkBench manual for instructions on doing this.

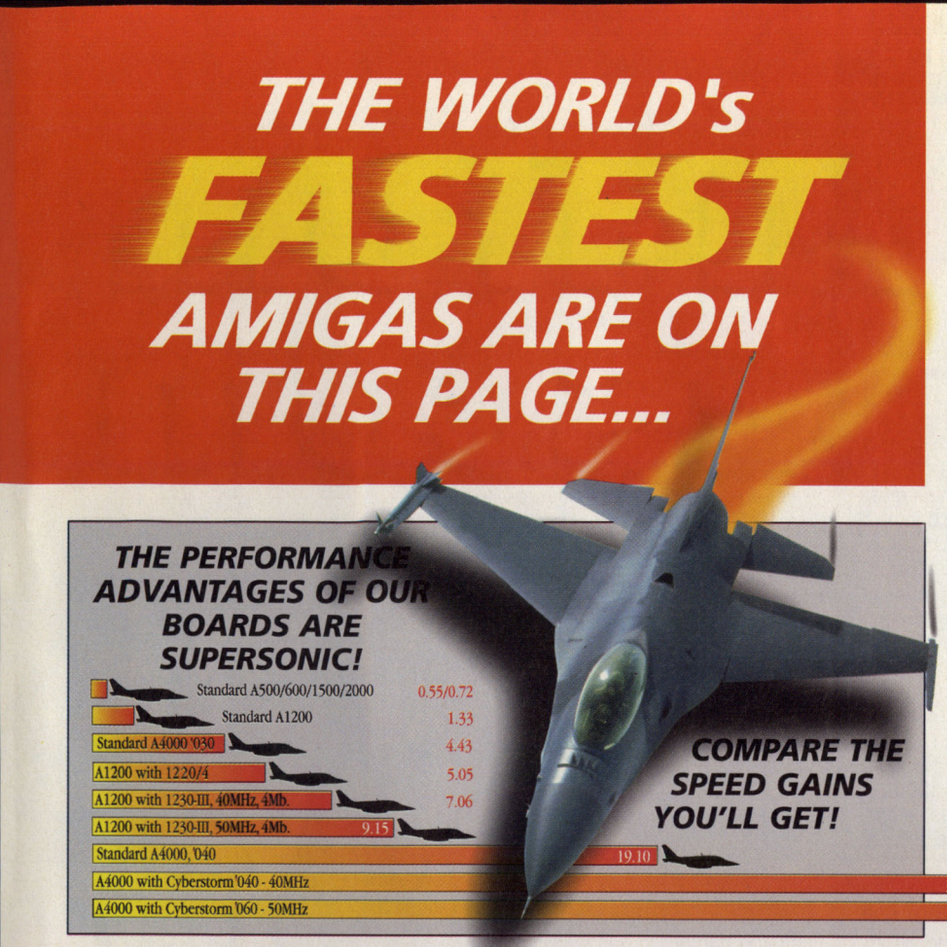
Should it all go horribly wrong, please WRITE to Amiga Answers at the address shown in the Answers section. DO NOT RING! We cannot answer queries over the 'phone. Sorry.

Documentation

All the plain documents can be read simply by double clicking on their icons. The text will scroll, use the mouse to control it and press Escape to quit. If the docs are in AmigaGuide format, you'll need a computer that can read AmigaGuide files in order to read them without all the nodes showing.

The docs can also be loaded into any Word Processor that reads ASCII, which is just about all of them.

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The Men from Escom

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

was then the powerhouse for the company, taking a 28% share of the total market in PCs alone.

But in 1990, van Tienen, disatisfied by the way that Commodore was run, even while it was still at the height of its power, left and later joined the much smaller but fast-growing growing ESCOM. And it is thought that while Manfred Schmitt is clearly the leader of ESCOM, it is Bernard van Tienen's vision of what could be done with Commodore and the Amiga that led to the takeover of the moribund company which was started by a bold stroke of securing the rights to Commodore Germany, before even the main auction took place.

We are all the product of our history. Manfred Schmitt's success has been based in massive retail sales beginning with the Commodore 64. Bernard van Tienen, a big corporation executive, saw at first hand the mismanagement that led to Commodore's downfall. For both the name "Commodore" had possessed enormous prestige. Schmitt knew how not so long ago the German public would buy whatever that carried that brand and saw no reason, given the right product line, why they and the rest of Europe would not again. Van Tienen, knowing the basic errors that had brought Commodore to its knees, relished the not unnatural pleasure at the prospect of showing how his old company, some one hundred of whose ex-staff members now worked for ESCOM,should really have been run. And for about a mere £8 million, a pittance compared with ESCOM's 1994 turnover of £960,000,000, the men from ESCOM picked up the whole show. No wonder the pair of them are presently going around looking like cats that have swallowed the cream.

But now they have won the prize, what are they going to do with it? There are certain things about which they have little option. They can't launch a new Amiga straight away. They know that to recover the lost ground, the Amiga must be back in the shops, other people's shops as well as possibly ESCOM's too, before Xmas. If they can't do that then in the face of the coming next generation of "playstations" - using that as a generic term meaning 32 or 64 bit games computers - the Amiga is dead as a mass market machine. With no time to develop or tool up for a new low price machine, they have to go with the present 1200. By the end of 1995, they plan to produce, between 120,000 and 150,000 1200s in exactly the same specification as before. They confidently predict the sale of every one of them.

For 1996, they plan to make the 1200, with an integral CD-ROM drive, an 030 machine, to be called, unsurprisingly, the A1300.

Their plan for the Amiga includes a much greater emphasis than in the past on the serious side of the computer with some 25,000 A4000's slated for production by the late Autumn. These A4000s will be in two specifications. 15000 will be 68040-based but 10,000 carry the 68060 development brought in from the Frankfurt company, Phase 5, whose 060-based Cyberstorm is now taking the starved Amiga market, well, by storm...

Manfred Schmitt told ***AUI,*** "We'd like to produce more A4000s but that's all we can manage in the time. The market for them is huge... And every A4000 we can manufacture is already sold."

A very agreeable position to be in when you have just taken over a company...



Manfred Schmitt, 45. "The opportunity with the Amiga is huge.. ESCOM is now turning from a PC manufacturer and retailer into a multimedia company."
ESCOM's millionaire boss owns 51% of the company he founded.

All Amigas, he told ***AUI,*** will now be bundled with Scala, as an encouragement for users to get into multimedia. And ***AUI*** heard that InfoChannel, Scala's professional version of the system, is to be installed in all ESCOM shops in Germany and possibly later in the UK.

The CD 32, the only other Amiga in production when CBM went down, is different matter. It's not that the men from ESCOM don't want it. They would love to put it on the market this year. However, the CD 32 was manufactured in the Phillipines. The factory in which production took place didn't belong to Commodore and is now busy turning out other electronic goods. The CD 32 components, about which there was much enquiry and bargaining during the liquidation of Commodore, are stored in large containers in total confusion. It will take months rather than weeks to sort out what is usable and during that time other manufacturing facilities must be found and organised. No CD 32s will therefore appear this year. But the men from ESCOM say they are committed to the machine for 1996 but with an 030 aboard and a complete redesign.

The stories that the intention is to resume production of the A600 are, we believe, unlikely to prove true. The men from ESCOM realise that it is machine that has not the power to compete at least in the developed world with the new "playstations". So why bring back old technology?

However, that might not apply all over the world. In the emerging countries, such as China, India and the ex-Eastern Block where ESCOM already has a foothold, the price, especially in hard currency, for the most up-to-date machines is still far out of reach for the vast majority of the population. According to Bernard van Tienen, in China there has already been production of a Commodore computer, the C64. Illegally. However, now it seems that ESCOM's manufacturing contacts, who already produce machines for them there are to produce C64s for the potentially immense Chinese market. With a production cost estimated at no more than £25 for the old Commodore workhorse, there is a future market of millions. And if you wanted, after a respectable and profitable period with ancient but locally-manufactured 8 bit technology, to introduce a cheap 16 bit system, the A600 might not be a bad idea, don't you think? Particularly if you didn't want grey market contemporary machines seeping into your developed countries.

"You surely remember the good old



Bernard van Tienen. "We will make a success of the still strong Commodore and Amiga brands."
Once VP of Commodore, owned a chain of 32 PC stores which he sold to ESCOM.
Now ESCOM director in charge of Commodore and Amiga Technologies.

Commodore 64 and its tremendous success in the early eighties." enthused Manfred Schmitt. "It is a famous episode in the home computer industry that could be compared with the Volksvagen Beetle."

But the A1200 and A4000, even if they move to be the 030 A1300 and the 060 A4000, are no more than a stopgap. They are, upgraded, still yesterday's machines. The computer world has moved on without Commodore and the Amiga benefiting from fifteen months or more of R&D, a nasty disadvantage where developments emerge almost with the seasons. The computer world is already looking far beyond the 68000 series. On the PC side, Intel is bringing out the P6, the next chip past the Pentium. IBM and Apple have the PowerPC RISC-based machines here now. The new Microsoft Windows 95 operating system is going to sweep through the software world like a whirlwind. Dual speed CD-ROM has come and almost gone in the interregnum of the Commodore liquidation. Quad speed is now the drive of choice.

On the mass market consumer side, the Multimedia PC, expensive though it may be, has stepped in and taken the upmarket family while the games nuts have dumped the cartridge kings, Nintendo and Sega overpriced 8 and 16 bit offerings and are apparently waiting, granny money in hand, for the 64 bit "playstations" to emerge from the mirage of hype.

So if the Amiga is to stay in there, it has to change and change quickly. There is no point, Manfred Schmitt told ***AUI*** in bringing out the triple A chip set." We need something entirely new."

That will be, as first predicted by ***AUI***, development into RISC-based technology. The two systems presently being considered are the PowerPC microprocessor developed by Motorola for IBM, Apple and now 3DO's second generation player M2 (see Chips Away Special report in this ***AUI***) and the proprietory RISC chip created by Hewlett Packard, the world's second largest computer company.

The Amiga would be in good company with either of those RISC technologies. Whichever they choose, it will, though, take some eighteen months to create a smart, shiny operating system for the Amiga to go with the novel technology. Manfred Schmitt admitted it takes that long even though they intend to set up R&D facilities in both Germany and the USA. Developer support will also continue in the UK.

Another interesting development for the Amiga is to open up its technology for licensing to other companies. ESCOM confirmed that the first deal, with Visual Information Services Corporation, a set top box development company in the USA. Don Gilbreath, Chief Technical Officer of Viscorp, told ***AUI.*** "We see Amiga as the ideal multimedia technology for the fast rising set top box market. It is flexible, easy-to-use and low price."

Surprise! Surprise! Don Gilbreath worked for Commodore from 1980 to 1992. His last job was Director of Product and Market Development.

With so many ex-Commodore staff involved with the new company, it's a bit like the boys coming back, kicking out the hated headmaster and taking over the school.

Yet another ex-CBM alumni is responsible for this planned opening up of Amiga licensing. Ed Goff, a Philadelphia-based lawyer, was previously CBM's worldwide general counsel. He's now the corporate lawyer for Amiga Technologies. It's his job to sort out the complex problems of intellectual copyright in the new dimension of Amiga licensing.

"We intend to make arrangement for further developments of the Amiga technologies with strategic partners. " he told ***AUI.*** "These partners will be well-known names in the electronics and telecommunications industries. Together with these partners we intend to fund further development of new and advanced products based partly on the Amiga and partly on proprietory and public systems provided by the strategic partner."

"A second area of licensing, " Goff told ***AUI.*** would be "embedded technology." One example of this is the deal with VisCorp. "It's our belief that encouraging vendors in these markets to embed Amiga capabilities or features could be very exciting..."

Ed Goff wasn't so cheerful about another area of at present apparently licensed use of Amiga technology. "We intend to review a wide variety of products and components with a view to licensing arrangements with their makers, users and sellers."

That sounds like this man from ESCOM could be trouble for some people presently exploiting Amiga technology such as software developers.

Despite the energy, the experience and the streetwise know-how that the men from ESCOM clearly possess of the Commodore and the Amiga situation and their unquestionable determination to succeed in the "rebirth" of Commodore and the Amiga, there are still some doubts about the future.

Can Commodore PCs really be brought back to compete with the Compaqs and the Dells and even the ESCOMs? True ESCOM have a High Street chain of stores through which to shift them but while in Germany, according to Manfred Schmitt, 50% of PCs are sold from High Street stores, in the UK only 17% of PCs are bought that way. That's both an opportunity and a problem, changing those UK buying habits.

It seems to be the intention of ESCOM to treat Commodore PCs as their upmarket brand. ESCOM's own 486s sell for as little as £499. It has been the higher price machines that have had difficulty while the falling prices have shifted millions of machines but cut profit margins too. It has been quantity of sales at lower prices that have brought profits and success to companies like Compaq and Dell. Whether ESCOM's apparent strategy for Commodore PCs will achieve the results they want is open to question.

More important to Amiga users is the development of the new Amiga Technologies concept. The commitment to the A4000 is one we would all applaud. However, it must be admitted that its technology is now more than three years old and the O/S is more ancient still. Another eighteen months before a new operating system emerges and the RISC technology evolves and there may be even more developments from competitors with such dream products as parallel processing and CD-ROM of seven gigabyte capacity becoming standard. Huge technological jumps are being made.

AUI pointed out to Manfred Schmitt that Scala, to be bundled with "every Amiga sold" needed a hard drive to run and suggested that an Amiga 1200 without such a drive was not just impracticable but was emphasising the antiquity of the technology. Why not put in even a small hard drive, say a 40 Meg?

"You can't get them that small." ESCOM's Chairman told ***AUI.*** "Not at 2½ inch. 420 Meg is about the smallest." But he wouldn't commit to making these or any other HD standard for the 1200.

Bundling with Scala seems to treat 1200 as a serious machine yet no hard drive...Is there yet a confusion in the minds of the men from ESCOM exactly what kind of machine they have to sell?

In the UK there is a clear distinction between the games machines and computers. This was a problem that Commodore in the UK was aware of but never solved. ESCOM need to make up their minds if they are going to go head to head with the "playstations" or the PC.

There also seemed, unsurprisingly in view of their successful PC record, a lesser emphasis on the development of games, or perhaps an understanding of what has happened in the last year or so to the games market. A major part of the world development of games software takes place in the UK. It is clear that those companies and even more in the USA, where in the games field the machine has disappeared from the market completely, have deserted the Amiga. Games these days are created as blockbusters and take investment in millions and up to a couple years of development. To persuade the top companies to come back to the Amiga market will be a enormous task and one that cannot be accomplished by

More Men From ESCOM



Petro Tyschtschenko. Worked for Commodore from 1982 ending a Director International Material Management and Logistics. Now General Manager, Amiga Technologies.



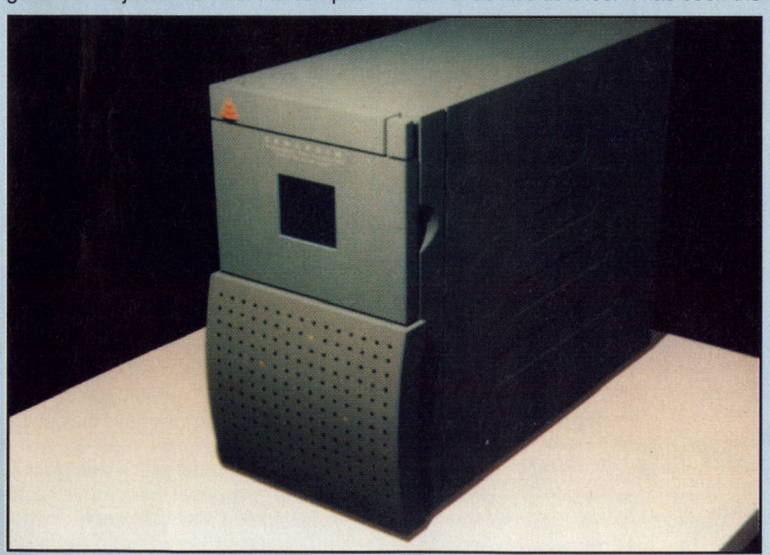
Ed Goff. Erstwhile Corporate Counsel for Commodore, now ESCOM's corporate lawyer for Amiga licensing. Will he frighten off Amiga software developers?



Jeff Frank. Worked for Commodore from 1986 finally as Director of Technology. Now ESCOM's Technical Development Consultant in the USA for Amiga R&D.



Don Gilbreath. Ex-Commodore Development Director. Now helping to create Amiga-based set top boxes with US technocorporation VisCorp.



The A4000 Tower. The newly designed flagship of the Amiga. Can it plough through the rough competitive seas even with 060 power?

The People from ESCOM

Who the heck is ESCOM, the new owners of Commodore and the Amiga? The men from AUI investigate.

So who do ESCOM think they are? They rode into the Commodore liquidation auction, blitzed the competition with an audacious offer, stumped up the money, and now own the rights to the Amiga.

The first Commodore watchers knew of ESCOM was in mid-March, when the company announced its interest in buying Commodore. By law, that started the formal auction procedure, which was completed on April 21.

The first the majority of the British public heard of ESCOM was in May when it was announced they were refitting the defunct Rumbelows chain they bought in March and turning them into state-of-the-art dedicated computer retail stores.

German Invasion

ESCOM computers was founded in Germany in 1987. It grew rapidly to become today the second-largest local European PC manufacturer.

Its own range of 486 and Pentium-based PCs are sold through its European-wide retail chain as well as through direct and partner distribution channels.

The ESCOM group turnover exceeded £960m in 1994. This came from operations across ten European countries including the UK, Belgium, France, Holland, Hungary and Scandinavia.

ESCOM claims to have invested £50m in the UK since it started manufacturing mini-tower PCs here in April 1994. The PCs built in the UK soon expanded to cover all the company's PC range by February 1995.

Expansion

As its business goals grew, ESCOM sold a 35% stake in itself to finance expansion. Buyers of that stake included Siemens Nixdorf, the multinational electronics organisation and Quelle, Germay's largest mail order company which also has substantial other business interests. The company founder, Manfred Schmitt still retains control.

Retail Launch

The expansion now includes a huge operation in the UK. The purchase of the 200 Rumbelows stores and their relaunch as dedicated ESCOM computer stores probably makes it the UK's biggest specialist computer retailer.

EasyWare

ESCOM claim their prices are 20% below major competitors and will stay that way. In addition it has a trading approach which purports to offer tailor-made PC packages for business and home users.

It appears to claim that by selling the computers it manufactures, ESCOM can bridge the gap between user needs and manufacturing. That means it can assess individual requirements and provide a customer with a cost effective solution. We've all heard that before.

Herr Schmitt told ***AUI*** that ESCOM would be targeting the 18 million UK households still without PCs. "In Germany, 50% of all PCs are sold from high street stores. In the UK only 17% are sold that way. There are huge opportunities for us to take advantage of that situation."

He said that ESCOM deigned the EasyWare concept "to appeal to personal users, first time buyers and small businesses".

ESCOM intend to be at the forefront of a trend towards a matching of the German situation by the turn of the century.

Big Boys

ESCOM pulled out all stops in order to puff itself up. Intel, IBM and Hewlett Packard were called in to back the launch of their high sstreet chain. Backing ESCOM's direction, Intel's vice president and General Manager in Europe, Steve Poole, told ***AUI*** that companies now needed to serve the needs of "the first time buyer or the less technically comfortable" And that ESCOM's approach was a good example of how to deal with the changing public for PCs. Intel are even helping train the staff that ESCOM are putting into their ex-Rumbelow shops. Because it is, ESCOM believes, of prime importance that the staff who greet and serve the probably rather technoinnocent if not ignorant public do not turn out to be like the usual chain store folk, undertrained and under-informed. ESCOM wants to be able to supply really intelligent service which gives the general public expert advice on the puzzling to most technological devices that they think they need.

The Man from ESCOM

The ESCOM publicity "blitz" started in May with what many people thought an uninventive "Man from ESCOM" advertising campaign.

At a press launch of the retail chain's first 100 stores, some poor embar-rassedammae model dressed in a gum-shoe mac, with sleeves too short, and Panama hat pretended he was a private eye, seeking out great deals on PC computers.

The somewhat naive campaign has continued in press advertising and brochures, which pivoted on a few key deals: like a £499 (ex VAT) PC with 170Mb hard drive and 4Mb RAM), and an ESCOM P60 PC with 540 hard drive and 8Mb RAM for £997.58 inc VAT.

The PCs may be cheap but the advertising campaign was not. ESCOM proudly admit to spending a cool £6m in national and regional press advertising. It also printed and distributed 13 million copies of its PC Buyers Guide.

The clumsy start stumbled further when it was revealed that the super-cheap PC was not available in some stores. However as a key UK advertising figure pointed out, it's often not the creativity of a campaign that counts but the sheer impact of the frequency, the amount of times people see an ad and start recognising and reading it. ESCOM's shops on the weekend after the campaign hit were crowded. The machines leapt off the shelves into the arms of eager buyers. A very reliable source in ESCOM told *AUI* delightedly in that first Saturday ESCOM sold products to the value of £2,600,000.

The man - or the men, with apologies to their female operations director - from ESCOM must be doing something right.

UK ESCOM People



Ann Foreman: Operations Director, ESCOM UK



Geoff Saunders: Commercial Director, ESCOM UK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

a low level development local-based support team.

It appears that in spite of the optimism expressed by David Pleasance and Colin Proudfoot, the joint MDs of Commodore UK, it wasn't possible to work out a deal with ESCOM. "We didn't need Commodore UK." One ESCOM man told ***AUI***. "We will run the company out of Holland... this is the European Union, we can invoice from there and deliver from there."

Geographically, he was right. Practically, ESCOM may be wrong. This is not a nationalistic point but to get and keep the now unwilling UK games developers and through them their US associates in the "reborn" Amiga market will need a supreme effort and if left long may turn out to be impossible.

AUI, of course, is not a games magazine and perhaps the disappearance from the future "playstation" market would benefit us and support our view that the Amiga should be a "serious" computer. But we would not wish to see ESCOM come a cropper in any form of the Amiga which could endanger the computer's survival.

We are all, as we commented earlier, rooted in our own history and perhaps victims of it. The men from ESCOM have been successful in manufacturing and selling PCs in the High Street in Germany. That experience must influence their views on how to market their new company's products in this country, a key market for the Amiga. But it may not be applicable here. That has yet to be seen.

The men from ESCOM experienced Commodore's and the Amiga's years of success. Their ideas, their prejudices, to a certain degree, come from back when they didn't control Commodore's and the Amiga's destiny.

Yet times and technology have changed, and are still very rapidly changing. The Amigas technical lead has been eroded, possibly destroyed, especially in the games market. ESCOM know how to market PCs which are really just IBM clones, can they develop and market new and unique Amigas? Can they give it and its millions of supporters a justification to continue their loyalty to the computer?

We all find it difficult to break away from the past, to discard prejudices and even formulae that have been successful for us. The future of the Amiga depends on the ability of the men from ESCOM having the imagination to create something new and special from the ruins of the Amiga that Commodore's disaster has left. They have the resources, to be sure, they have the experience, that is certain. Not to make the mistakes of the previous management, on that they are determined. But do they have the genius, and it may take genius, really to give a rebirth to a computer which was close to death and for much of the computer actually considered like the Monty Python parrot, deceased, kicked the bucket, pushing up the daisies, dead, do they have that magic ability? The jury is still out. ***AUI***

Warthogs love big jobs



You will be stunned by the speed of the new Warthog 275 from Premier Vision - and positively gobsmacked by the incredibly low price. The Warthog275 is based on the world's fastest chip -the DEC Alpha, making it the most complete cost effective rendering solution on the market. Up to a massive 30 times faster than other rendering systems, allows the Warthog 275 to simply gobble up any job you care to throw at it.

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- 2 Mb 17Ns secondary cache RAM
- 32 Mb DRAM (Expandable)
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- Full multiple fanned Tower Case with 1.44MB floppy drive
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Custom configurations can be designed to your own specification.

The Warthog 275 MHz is fully expandable and upgradable, and at a price of £7,499.00, its just dying to do big jobs for you!!

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Premier Vision's Humanoids and Warthogs
Apollo Accelerators
Sony's Richer Sound

Compiled and edited by Anthony Mael and Martin Witton.

CD Booms

The massive sales of "multimedia" personal computers have driven sales of the pre-recorded CD-ROM market up by a record 227% in 1994, according to market research company Dataquest. Microsoft have sold the most discs at 8.3 million with total sales for CDs reaching an estimated 53.9 million units in 1994, up from 16.5 million discs in 1993.

It has been estimated that while at the beginning of 1994 sales of PCs that had CD-OM drives was only about 30% of total PC sales, now sales of "multimedia PCs", largely to home users, are running at about 80% of all PCs sold. And with the coming glut of quad speeds pushing down the price of CD-ROM drives, it's a reasonable guess that come this time next year ALL desktops, including Amigas, will have CD aboard.

A Silicon Bank?

The Corporation of London has launched the UK's first feasibility study into providing an electronics recycling service. Every year in the City, it is estimated about 1,800 tonnes of electronic products reach the end of their working life, a large and growing proportion ends up in the general commercial waste collected by the Corporation.

"Local authority recycling activities usually deal with domestic waste like bottles and cans, but with our small residential population and huge business community, this electronics scheme make sense in the City" said Barbara Newman, the Corporation's planning and transportation chairman. The study will look at all electrical and electronic waste, from "redundant computer mainframes to burned out kettles."

Redundant kettles? Are they referring to our old 1500?

Amiga Spreads the Sheets

Khalid Aldoseri has developed what has been described as 'a dream of a spreadsheet' for the Amiga. Khalid Aldoseri has produced all the programming on the FinalCalc spreadsheet himself having worked on it for several years. During this time he has been keeping the records for his own business on it, and adding features as he found a need for them.

FinalCalc is claimed to be a high end spreadsheet for the Amiga with the main formula recalc engine providing natural formulae which are evaluated in the order of their interdependence. The recalc engine always runs in the background catching up and displaying work as the user goes along.

FinalCalc is designed to be user friendly recalculating only what is needed or what has changed. It is driven by mouse or key although every function can be controlled by the keyboard without using the mouse.

FinalCalc supports multiple sheets per project - up to 254 sheets. Besides the powerful printing features there are 2D and 3D graphs, and more than 630 ARexx/script commands.

PowerPC 602 for the Amiga?

IBM and Motorola have announced that they are moving into production of the PowerPC 602 chip, aimed at games and television set-top boxes. The 602 is what 3DO will use in its M2 Accelerator for its follow-up player.(See the Microprocessors Special Report in this ***AUI***.) Matsushita too intends to use it in the 64-bit 3DO systems it is manufacturing.

The chip has been clocked at 66Mhz, includes on-chip floating point unit and uses superscalar technology. It is rated at 132 mega flops and it has 4Kb data and instruction caches and dissipates a mere 1.2W.

With ESCOM's discussions with Motorola and IBM proceeding apace, this chip - without 3DO's own custom additions but probably with some special Amiga extras - is the favourite for inclusion as the RISC-based CPU for the next generation Amiga.

Super Highway Speeds Up

CompuServe and America Online have reported record figures for their online services, grabbing 5.5 million subscribers between them.

CompuServe said the online service had exceeded 3 million active accounts, claiming up to 60,000 new signings each week. It attributed the growth to increased interest in online services and the promise of its Internet access now available on the service.

CompuServe's big competitor, America OnLine, also announced success and that it had passed the 2.5 million mark, more than tripling its user base in the past 12 months.

America Online also announced its financial results. Its members spend an average of $17 - £12 - per month, so a member base of 2.5 million translates to a turnover of $500,000,000 - around £300,000,000. Not bad for an industry that a year or so ago was still in the doldrums except for a couple of million largely college-based enthusiasts.

SoftLogic's PageStream Updates

For modemless folk - and the world is still full of them, though you might not believe it from the hype about the Internet that fills the communication media - SoftLogic are offering a subscription service for all minor PageStream 3.0 updates, rather than having to pay for each update by mail.

For $40.00 SoftLogic will mail you each of the updates (3.0d, 3.0e - up to and including 3.1) as they become available. The update disks will, they say, be identical to the update patches offered online.

Most online users, say SoftLogic, will find it more cost-effective to continue to download each update, but for users who have to call long-distance to get them, this update subscription may be more affordable.

Contact: SoftLogic Publishing Corporation, 11131F South Towne Square, St. Louis MO 63123 USA. Tel: 1.800.829.8608

Cure for the Blues?

People with psychological problems can find benefit from computer-based therapy, according to two research groups in California. The computer program has been tried on people with mild to moderate psychological problems, particularly those people suffering from anxiety and stress. (Like the NewsFile team?)

The second group in the trials were suffering from anxiety related depression. The trials included using traditional therapy on parallel groups of sufferers. Both groups reported equal improvements, but the 'computer' group, although missing the human touch, claimed that they felt more at ease divulging their feelings to an anonymous screen.

Of course! Don't you relieve your feelings to your computer screen, especially when the damn machine has crashed... That's why the Editor's screen has that blue tint - from the language. But he says that he has no hang-ups at all though. (Oh really?)

Watch for Virtual Pamela?

Pamela Anderson fans will be able to watch their favourite bits of Baywatch (and of Pamela Anderson), with Byron Preiss Multimedia Co's forthcoming CD-ROM of the TV series. The licence with the Baywatch production company will give rise to "live action video clips",) Live action? What's live about the action in Baywatch the movement when Pam runs down the beach to save some foolhardy paddler?) plus trivia from the show and a set of screensavers. The company is also developing titles based on Beverly Hills 90210, Melrose Place and Frasier.

Interactive soaps? Can we have them mixed with shoot 'em ups to give those pathetic programmes what they really deserve?

You're mine all mine!

That's what Sony has told Psygnosis, since the games developer sold out to the electronic giant. Psygnosis now cannot continue to produce games for the likes of Nintendo and Sega, or the Amiga on which it started. Sony its big daddy, has ordered it to confine itself to 16-bit games for Sony's upcoming Play-Station. Sony Electronic Publishing is also expected to merge the Sony Imagesoft and Psygnosis divisions into a new entity to be called Sony Interactive Entertainment.

Yes, you take big money and it becomes a gold chain around your ankle, Psygnosis has found. Still there are plenty who would be glad enough to be in that enslaved situation. However, if the Playstation, in spite of all the hype doesn't take off - and stranger things have happened - Psygnosis, the company that with Brattacus created the first UK Amiga game, might just regret having sold its soul and find itself up a Scouse creek without a paddle. That would surely cast a nasty shadow over their beastly bank account, wouldn't it?

Gazing Hopelessly through Windows

Microsoft is hoping to tempt games programmers onto the Windows 95 with a set of programming interfaces which are claimed to let them 'hit the metal' directly to create speedy applications.

The Windows 95 software development kit includes DirectDraw API, for hardware accelerated display performance. DirectSound APIs; DirectPlay APIs which enable simple multiplayer networked communication and DirectInput which provides joystick support.

The DirectDraw API is, according to Microsoft, an evolution of the WingG games interface Microsoft announced for Windows 3.1 last year, it gives direct access to the machines graphics frame buffer, avoiding intervening layers of Windows code.(Hooray!)

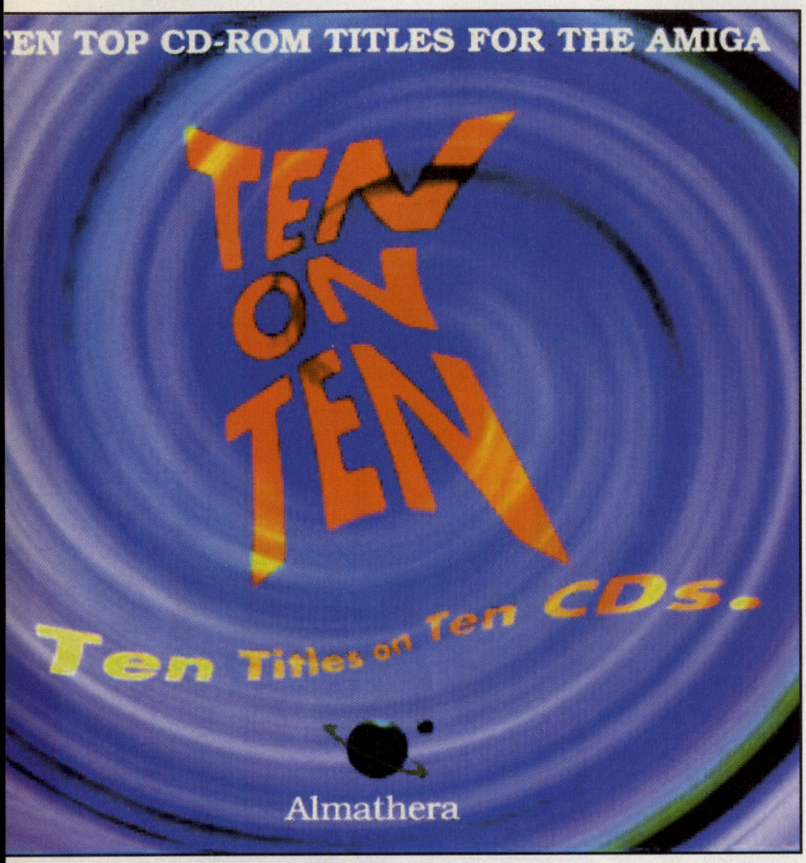
The problem for Microsoft is that to date, programmers wanting to implement arcade style action have run a mile when faced with Windows screen handling capabilities, instead, often opting for quick and dirty assembly language routines run as part of a DOS application.

Though WinG attempted to woo games programmers onto Windows 3.1, the stakes are substantially higher with Windows 95. Windows 3.1 wasn't threatened by the continuing popularity of Windows-based games since users could always quit to DOS. Under Windows95, there is no DOS to quit out to and playing a DOS game requires something messy like re-booting from a floppy first.

A senior Microsoft staffer, who had better remain anonymous for his own protection, told *AUI* that though Microsoft were producing games using their own devices "Don't bother with them. They're crap!" (We think he meant the games!)

If Microsoft people can't use their tools to create good games, they are unlikely to be able to convince other developers to make the effort.

Almathera's Ten CDs!



Almathera get ten out of ten for value.

Almathera decided that the dedicated Amiga user deserved a really big goodie. For the first time in the Amiga history, according to the company, a complete pack of ten CDs will be for sale for the price of just £39.95. Yes, that's under £4 a disc.

The amazing Almathera ten pack contents include three early titles from Almathera themselves, CDPDI, CDPD11 and DEMOI. You also get Optonica's Pandora, which contains Clip Art, textures, photo libraries and demos on multimedia applications for POS, POI, education and training stuff too.

Almathera says that World Vista Atlas now works on all CD-ROMs. It's an interactive atlas with maps, socio-demographic facts and audio track of speeches and music.

The Complete Works of Shakespeare contains, surprise, surprise, the complete text of all the Bard's plays as well as sonnets and poems. Bill would have cheered to have thought that so many totally unliterary computer users will get the chance to have his COMPLETE works literally, or even literately, at their electronic fingertips.

At the other extreme of material if not the body, Team Yankee, a tank game recently re-released on the Amiga, is also there in the pack.

Three new discs otherwise not published separately include Almathera's own Photogenics 1.2 demo with a library of pictures comprising Almathera's clip art and fonts, and a Networking and Comms CD containing a bootable disk. This CD contains comms software and information about WWW, Mosaic, Usenet, the Archie browser, AmiTCP, Netreck, interactive games and facts about the world of communications.

It has been obvious that the rise in the number of CD drives sold - one Amiga CD drive seller alone told ***AUI*** that they are selling more than 700 a month - has caused the volume of CDs being bought to jump. That increase in sales has brought down the production price of CDs too which is to the benefit of users. However, Almathera's ten discs for under £40 seems even so a real bargain.

So what is the catch? Nothing that we can see. Ten discs for under £40.00 seems like a tremendous offer. But, Almathera told ***AUI***, there are only 3000 of these packs available, so get in there quickly if you want to be sure of having one of your very own. You can order direct from Almathera.

Contact: Almathera, Boundary Business Court, 92-94 Church Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3TD. Tel: 0181 687 0040.

Polishing the Golden Image

Golden Image are taking advantage of the news of Commodore's rescue by ESCOM, by relaunching two of their best selling products. "We at Golden Image UK are entering the PC marketplace, but our main side of the business is still concentrated upon the Amiga" said Navin Shar, Managing Director of the company. That sounds like eminent good sense to us and a loyalty worth supporting, don't you think?

Golden Image told ***AUI*** that their Mega Mouse 400 which they are relaunching was originally brought out at £14.95, but is now priced at £12.95.

The Auto Mouse/Joystick switch which saves multiple usage Amiga users from having to plug and unplug their joysticks into the mouse port, gives you the option of connecting two mice or joysticks into the Amiga at the same time. The box itself connects directly into the mouse port and provides, say Golden Image, a one stop solution. To switch between the devices all the you have to do is press the button on the mouse/joystick and it will automatically switch over and at the same time the LED will show the current selection. Useful idea.

The AutoMouse/Joystick's price has been reduced from £17.95 to £12.95.

Contact: Golden Image UK Ltd, 65 Hallmark Trading Estate, Fourth Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0LB. Tel: 0181 900 9291.

Right on

A new CD out is called the Zion Train. What's original about it? The fact that The Zion Train makes no claim to be "authoritative, learned or sophisticated" but has been "compiled in the spirit of esoteric and opinionated subjectivity", according to the company.

That's sounds a bit different, doesn't it?

The CD ROM features the Zion Train Hemp Resource, which we assume has to do with what an ex-MD of Commodore once described as "wacky baccy". There is also an interactive guide to the "Wibbly Wobbly World of Music". Is that perhaps how music seems after you have put into practice that Hemp Resource? However, the whole thing goes respectable, or rather more so, with contributions from Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. Sounds like a far out and solid CD, babe.

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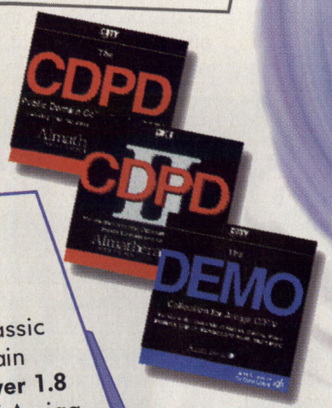


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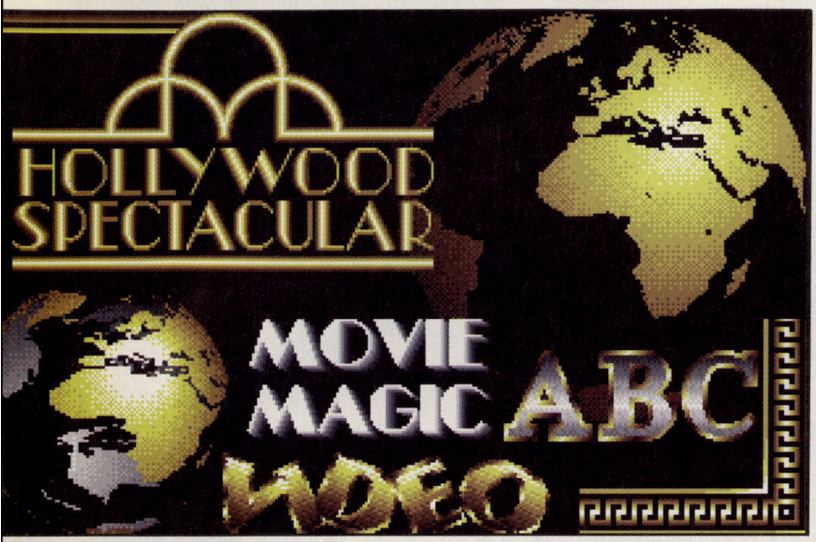
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Animated Diskotech



Diskotech's fonts, dancing with colour and movement.

Diskotech have "addressed the problem of expensive professional video titles which blaze with colour and movement", by developing a new collection of animated colour fonts for the Amiga at what they claim is a budget price.

All the fonts they supply are compatible with Deluxe Paint III or similar, work on all Amiga computers and in all screen formats. The fonts can be used for both animated and static titles and additional graphics enlarge the mix and match capacity.

Twelve different fonts are included in the new Moviefonts eleven disk package which costs £35.00.

Contact: Diskotech, Melin-Y-Garth, Builth Wells, Powys, LD4 4AW. Tel: 01591 620242.

Learning Lightwave

Those busy, busy technochaps at Premier Vision have told ***AUI*** that due to increasing demand for training in LightWave 3D, they are holding a series of LightWave seminars. Because they had Lightwave users banging down their doors for some fast action and wanting a seminar to take place before the Summer, as this ***AUI*** hits the street, there is a Lightwave seminar already taking place. If you want to jump in on that one get your skates on.

However, half day introduction seminars will run every Wednesday and a range of more advanced topics will be covered in full day seminars ("with a free lunch". We thought there was no such thing!) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Subjects covered are Course A - basic modelling, Course B - advanced modelling, Course C - camera, lighting and animation techniques and Course D - surfacing and texturing for professional results.

The half day introductory course will cost £50.00, with the full day more advanced courses costing £200.00.

Bernard Shaw said "Those who can do, those who can't teach." He was wrong. Sometimes those who can do also teach and what better way to learn Lightwave than to get to knowledge straight from the experts?

Contact: Premier Multimedia Ltd. The Foundary, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EN. Tel: 0171 721 7050.

Apple Gets Set to Top It

Getting a computer onto the top of a TV so that you can select among the hundreds, nay thousands of channels they're going to shove at us plus all those rooty-tooty services the cable and telecom companies are aching to offer, is the latest big thing. ESCOM are talking of already having licensed out Amiga technology for a such a set top box and last year ***AUI*** reported that Scala had done a deal, with their Amiga based program with General Instruments, the USA's biggest set top supplier, to move into this burgeoning business,

Now Apple are getting in on the act. Apple has revealed some of the details of its own prospective set-top decoder. The box is to be built around Motorola's 68040 processor, (Wow! What a surprise!) and not Apple's much boosted PowerPC processor, which had been rumoured as the preferred chip. It will sell for about $750 - around £500, which sounds a lot to us compared with the kind of prices that will be charged for an Amiga-based box.

The Apple Interactive TV Box is said to be about to start trials in the UK and in Belgium, with an educational project in the US.

Quotes of the month

"The greatest challenge to the successful growth of the electronic entertainment industry is software piracy, particularly on the Internet and other worldwide networks" warned Howard Lincoln, Nintendo of America president, in his keynote speech on the second day of the recent E3 electronic games show in Los Angeles. "Organised counterfeiting is a far more dangerous challenge facing interactive entertainment and affects everyone whose livelihood depends upon the business" said Lincoln.

"The proliferation of copying equipment and the rise of worldwide networks like the Internet expand the already daunting problem of software counterfeiting into the borderless reaches of cyberspace" he warned, adding "And there the prospects for protecting our businesses, our employees and the products of our imagination are downright chilling".

Technology is, as someone said of money, neither good nor bad. It's the people and the organisations who use who make it what it is. It behoves ill of the President of Nintendo to criticise the use of technology, which certainly may have damaging effects on his business it's true, when the use that organisations like his own have made of technology while less criminal is hardly to be judged greatly beneficial to the world in general.

Nintendo and Sega are, more than any companies, responsible for the spread of technological devices to the young of the world. But what were those devices used for? Mind-numbing Mario-ness. Sonic stupification. Oh yes, there are their pet psychologists who make claims that the little handheld monsters improved hand and eye coordination but isn't there a far greater service that technology as clever as that could have performed for the human race?

The Internet, probably rightly, is chilling indeed for big corporations such a Nintendo who see themselves losing power over their market with the anarchic and seemingly uncontrollable tendencies of "borderless cyberspace." Piracy is just one of the many aspects that must frighten them. Another might well be that, as the fall in cartridge sales have shown, the interconnection of a technological society brings better informed users. And once informed of the true levels of the commercial exploitation to which they are being subjected, sometimes people actually stop allowing themselves to be exploited. Wow! Isn't that awful? Now that prospect must be an even more terrifying thought to presidents of the Nintendos of this world even than piracy.

Ranger Cads Up

Aydin Controls has announced an upgrade of its best selling Ranger 20S1 Monitor. The new Ranger 20S2, which they told ***AUI*** is an entry level CAD monitor, features Autosync, low radiation and high refresh with a resolution up to 1280 x 1024, which makes it compatible with the majority of popular graphics cards and workstations currently available, say Aydin.

The high contrast dark glass tube combines a 0.28cm dot pitch and dynamic focus capability to deliver brilliant colours and sharp image quality to the full screen area according to the company. The 20S2 is microprocessor controlled to offer full digital control with 12 factory presets and 15 user programmable modes.

The price of £1168.00 may seem a bit on the rich side for impecunious Amiga users but for pro CAD work this level of monitor is the kind of quality required.

Contact: Aydin Controls UK Ltd., 1/3 Hunting Gate, Hitchin SG4 0TJ. Tel: 01462 458804.



High quality and contrast but suits the pro CAD user.

Coxing Us to buy a Pippin?

Interactive entertainment platforms may soon have another contender for a slice of the market. Who else but Apple would produce the Pippin? Sega and Nintendo may be pipped(!) at the post with the joining forces of the world's third biggest toy company, Bandai with Apple to make the transition from 16 bit technology to the new wave of 32 bit or 64 bit architecture.

Sony and 3DO are already chasing part of the potential $15 billion global multimedia market. Apple has said it will license its RISC-based technology to Bandai which will manufacture, distribute and market the Pippin.

Pippin is a really Power Mac without a keyboard, hard drive, floppy disk or built in operating system. So what does it have? It has a CD drive... The quad speed CD Rom drive-based machine is expected to retail at $500 and, they say, will be launched in Japan in September.

Apple have finally woken up to the idea that consumers want machines to play games on but whether they will buy Pippins to do it is another question. Of course, Apple can pay to get developers to create games but somehow with all the opposition around it doesn't seem likely that another machine starting virtually from scratch is going to break into the market that is hotly contested - or will be - as it is.

Of course, that problem will face the next generation games machine Amiga too..

Samsung Gets in on Gigabyte Drive

Colorado-based Integral Peripherals, one of the pioneers of the 1.8" disk drives has announced that it is to start producing its own 2.5" disk drives with Samsung Electronics. The two are working to design a low-profile drive that will pack in 1Gb, using conventional technology and will be suitable for portables. I gigabyte for portables what will they use that for? The drive starts production shortly.

Spain Goes on-line

Two leading Spanish companies in the fields of computer technology and electronic games have taken interactive entertainment a step further, they claim, with the creation of Teleline. TSAI which is part of Telefonica Group (the Spanish BT) and Proeinsa (a major distributor of software) have developed the interactive entertainment via telecommunications.

Users can access the service 24 hours a day through the Teleline Multimedia System, provided they have a modem connected to a computer. Besides computer games, antivirus program upgrades and virus detectors, there is a Teleshopping service to purchase computer games. Music CDs, videos and books are next in line for the on-line development.

Contact: Teleline 34 1 575 4751.

Buongiorno Amiga!

Light Shock, a new Italian firm of Amiga software programmers is looking to the UK for publishing partners.

The Florence based company consists of 17 developers - should they be called Team 17? - from Holodreams, Simulmundo and various other Italian software firms. The team told ***AUI*** that it has four projects in development including Black Viper 003, a motorcycle game, Run Ball - a volleyball game and Fighting Spirit, all for the Amiga. The titles are expected to be completed by the end of the year with Light Shock currently working towards a publishing deal.

With all the difficulty that the new owners of the Amiga may face in convincing the top games developers to jump back onto the Amiga bandwagon - if there will be a games bandwagon for the Amiga - those keen to use their Amigas for sheer entertainment as Mark Blackham calls it - may well have much to be grateful for to the new Italian firm if they come up with the sheer entertainment goods. Not too many others are still willing to go out on the Amiga games limb for fear of falling off and hitting the floor with a nasty financial crash.

Book In at the Hotel CD

Want a room at the Hilton? Check it out on your computer. Hilton International has launched a new edition of its Worldwide Directory only now it's on CD ROM.

Geoffrey Breeze, Corporate VP - Marketing told ***AUI***. "CD-ROM is now a viable and more desirable alternative to conventional publishing methods and this medium provides us with a more dynamic and stimulating way in which to market our hotels". Containing information on more than 160 hotels operated by Hilton International in almost 50 countries, the CD-ROM features details on Hilton's products and services.

We can see that CD-ROM will start to replace all those bikini strewn holiday brochures with more local colour than just pictures of beaches, They can even put sound on them, including the Ouch! when you see your hotel bill with the price of all that stuff which seemed so easy to drink from the mini-bar. And that's what they charge for a phone call?

Quotes of the month

Sceptics who reckon that the entertainment industry has peaked, were dismissed by Tom Kalinske, president of Sega of America at the opening of the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles. Blithely brushing off the idea that the market is saturated, Kalinske said "It is time for the press and analysts to take off their cautionary hats for a change, to move the meter a tick or so to the right, to see that this is an industry that merely paused to take a breath before resuming its stunning growth pattern. This is a $5 billion industry that is going to grow to $9 billion by the year 2000".

Pausing to take a breath himself from his long sentences, he pointed to the growth in sales of Saturns and Playstations sold in Japan. He cited this as evidence that he expects the new machines to sell over three million units in the US alone in the first year. "This is a business which is ready to explode".

Oh really, Tom? Don't you talk to your opposite number at Nintendo? (If you don't then see previous Quote of the Month in this *AUI* NewsFile, Tom).

Your oppo is desperately worried that the whole industry - which for him means Nintendo, no doubt, is about to go down the pan due to all those piratical cyberspaced out users. But you, Tom, want us journos to take off our cautionary hats and halleujah the coming $9 billion age.

Are you just whistling in the dark to cheer yourself up with the stunning fall in your cartridge business when you want that tick to the right, whatever that may mean? The claimed sales in Japan. Ah yes. There are those who think that sales figures given by computer manufacturers as a whole are all about as reliable as Commodore's used to be. And in any case, Japanese sales may turn out to be no real guide to what the rest of the world will buy. Remember the great MSX failure or the PC Towns. Announced as big successes in Japan but going down like extra heavy lead balloons elsewhere.

It's anyway not the job of the Press to take off its hat - cautionary or Kiss Me Quick - to anybody but to report on what's going on so that the readers can make up their own minds whether they want to be bum-rushed into buying something or not.

The "business" - does that mean video games alone? - could well reach $9 billion or even more by the end of the century but we might put forward the hope that it won't just be for "playstations", technological toys, but for devices that use the brilliance of today's electronics for rather more than fast moving beat 'em ups and other tired old games formulae. Those from which the video games companies like your own have pulled in billions already and spread a creed of sickening triviality among possibly hundreds of millions of young people while doing it.

Aural illusion 2

Seasoft have told ***AUI*** that they are releasing Aural Illusion 2 for users to edit, create and mutate samples. This release has 30 variable effects including Time Stretch, Graphic Equalizer, Mixer, Resonant Filter, Compress, Gate, Reverb, Echo, Chorus, Flange, Phase Shift and Stereo Processor.

The program has 55 manipulations, a 16 bit Morphing Wave synthesizer with 8 mixable wave types and editing functions including loudness, cut, swap and copy over.

Aural Illusion 2 supports various 8 and 16 bit file formats such as IFF and AIFF and is compatible with Aura files.

All processing is done in 32 bit format with samples held in 16 bit format. The program requires Workbench v2.04 or greater and 2 Meg RAM. Price £20.00.

Contact: Seasoft Computing, Unit 3, Martello Enterprize Centre, Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton, West Sussex. BN17 7PA.

Sold Out!

ESCOM has sold out just weeks after taking over the Amiga! Sold out of PCs that is. ESCOM's offer of a high performance PC at the giveaway price of £499 in its 100 new stores left it out of stock at its new (old Rumbelows) shops on just the second day of trading.

Rivals had complained that stocks in ESCOM's stores were consistently low before the recent offer. (Though why they should complain is beyond us. If ESCOM was out of stock wouldn't their rivals sell more? Odd business selling computers must be..)Even the assistants in ESCOM's shops were said to be worried how to appease customers with stocks not expected for 10 days after the sell out.

At the launch announcing the firm had opened 100 of its converted Rumbelows shops, giving it 127 outlets overall and making it the UK's largest dedicated PC retailer, Gerald Lindhout, ESCOM's commercial director said "I can't promise we will never have stock problems".

Oh dear, does that bode well or ill for the Amiga? Will they produce enough Amigas to satisfy demand or will we find buyers aroused to purchasing madness prowling the streets in packs - the eager buyers that is not the Amigas - prepared to offer us vast sums for our second hand 500s after their appetite for Amigas has been raised to unrealistic levels by the brilliance of ESCOM's marketing? We do hope that"stock problems" are not going to emerge for the Amiga, we've had enough of that over the past year or so.

Plug and Play Doubler

A new accelerator, the Doubler 4000 for Amiga 4000/40 users is claimed to deliver "across the board speed increases for all applications and system functions." according to distributors Blittersoft.

Priced at £399.95, this "plug and play" accelerator is "100% software and hardware compatible using a Motorola 68040. No software upgrading is necessary."

Blittersoft told ***AUI*** that the daughter board replaces the 25MHz 68040 CPU socket on the Amiga 3640 board. Customers are supplied with photo-illustrated installation instructions as well as the extraction tool to perform the installation.

The Doubler 4000 includes an on-chip math co-processor.

Contact: Blittersoft, 6 Drakes Mews, CrownHill, Milton Keynes, MK8 OER. Tel: 01908 261466.

What a waste

Ribbon Revival believe that children are far more aware of the importance of caring for the environment than disposing and even disposable adults. The company wants businesses, schools and anyone working with computers at home to think before disgarding their printer consumables and replacing them with new ones. Not only, they say, will you be helping the environment, but by using remanufactured products you can save between 30 to 70 per cent of the normal replacement cost.

Ribbon Revival's sentiments are not only altruistic, they are a fast expanding company manufacturing products which they claim are guaranteed to meet and in many cases exceed the original manufacturers specification.

The growth of the company dedicated to stopping people throwing away or dumping ribbons and cartridges, has already, they told *AUI*, resulted in a significant drop in the numbers of discarded printer cartridges. How refreshing to see a company actively seeking to better our children's future and our own, of course, that's if you aren't like us to old to have one.

Contact: Ribbon Revival Ltd., Caslon Court, Pitronnerie Road, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, Channel Islands, GY1 2RW. Tel: 01481 729552

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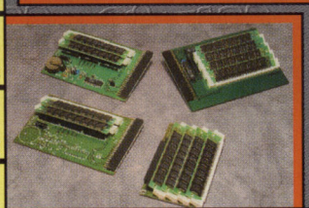
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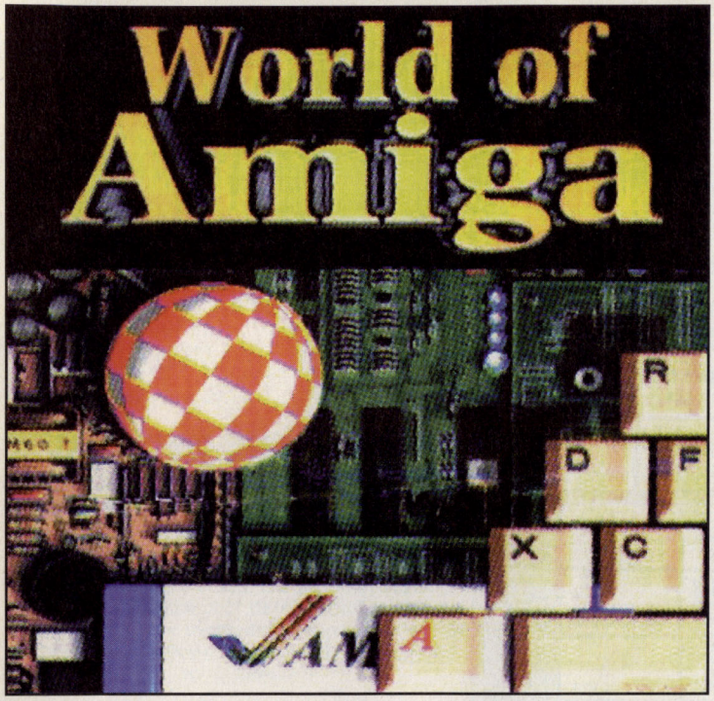
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Some so hot we couldn't even mention them!

CD ROMS are ACE

US Dreams is a new range of CD ROMs for the Amiga and CD32 - including 40 adult titles which are said to be too 'hot' to publicise individually. Those which are printable include the Top 100 Games for CD32, World of A1200, World of CD32 and World of Amiga. All CD ROMs are priced between £14.99 and £19.99. ACE are also looking for distributors.(You can try to get them to send you some "on trial" but will they believe you?)

The 80 titles are currently available through CD Ltd, Waltham House, Grove Road, Woking Surrey GU21 5JB. Tel: 01483 756813.

It takes two (or three?)

The definitive guide to human sexual relationships "pushes the boundaries of interactive learning" (oh really?) according to its creators, TF & G. This fully interactive CD ROM contains over 50 minutes of video for your delectation, to interact alone with or preferably with a friend or even two. (Now that sounds interesting...)

Covering, or uncovering perhaps, such areas as foreplay and erogenous zones,(Are they the levels in shoot 'em ups that don't have guardians?) the disc is also claimed to `fully' explore the physical relationship between a man and a woman. (A disc can do that?)

The Pleasures of Sex - an interactive encyclopaedia of sex - also has over 290 still photographs and 2 hours of audio. (Moans and groans or talking dirty?)

Microsoft tops the league

Dataquest's latest research figures show that for CD-ROM sales Microsoft lead the pack with a mighty 15.4% market share. Old Amiga hand, Mindscape is reported to have 12.4% of the growth with Grolier, of encyclopaedia fame, chalking up 5.1 million of the 53.9 million multimedia CDs. DPaint creators, Electronic Arts came fourth with 3 million - 5.5% of the total. Titles bundled with hardware such as multimedia PCs, CD-ROM drives, sound cards and FMV cartridges account for 66% of all CD titles sold.

Dramatic Moves from Electronic Arts

Equity, the actors' union, never slow to get in on an act (!), have defined the terms that European publishers will have to abide by to produce interactive movies in the UK. Equity and Electronic Arts have signed the first UK deal one which follows that which was recently made by EA and the US Equity equivalent - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. The new deal covers the terms and conditions for on and off camera Equity artists.

Interactive movies have been slow to get off the ground despite being touted as the next big games genre. However the involvement of Equity and the current improvement in games could result in more development. Though the big problem is not so much a technical as a creative one - how do you really get a player to interact with a story?

EA's first interactive movie to be shot in the UK has the working title of Darkside with shooting at Pinewood studios starting shortly.

It took years for the cinema at the beginning of this century to get anywhere near films sufficiently sophisticated to bring reality and intelligent interest to the flickering screen. It would seem very unlikely that the early interactive movies will prove to be masterpieces especially when you realise that the average age of the present probable market will be about fourteen or fifteen. Is that an audience that will encourage quality movies or Doom-style or Dumb and Dumber material? Answers on a postcard please to Mark Lewis at Electronic Arts.

Quad speed price crash



Prices coming down like knickers on a hot night.

Just three months ago NewsFile was reporting with some wonderment that quad speed CD drives had fallen below the £200 mark. Now though, even we hardened techno-watchers almost incapable of Wowing! over anything, are agape at the idea that these so recently developed drives are available for £125.95. Yes, Goldstar, well-known for their monitors, have brought out a quad speed IDE drive at that measly price. It is, to use Gideon Overhead's favourite word, incredible! But we assure you, true.

Korean techno giant Goldstar's UK marketing boss Kevin Thiele told ***AUI*** that the drives are compatible with Kodak Photo CD and fit into a 5 1/4" bay and are compatible with most sound cards.

Quad speed drives from companies like Goldstar are appearing on the market with the rapidity of measles on an unimmunised schoolkid. The dual speed drive which only took over from the single speed in the last year or so is already on the way out and the new big thing in the consumer market, the "Multimedia PC" is no longer considered so big unless it has that magic multisession whizo quad speed unit stuck within its techno innards. Is there no stopping this CD juggernaut? We hear you cry. The answer, with quad speed drive prices coming down like the proverbial stone, or better still, knickers on a hot night, is no, no. no and no. Quad no, in fact.

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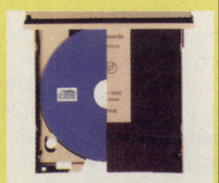
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The Greatest Drive Since the Model T Ford



Well the wait is over and the future has arrived in the shape of the new Panasonic PD System SCS! Optical drive. This unit is a Hybrid 650mb, Quad speed CD-ROM and Optical Read/Write system. (Yes, you did read that correct!)
Now you can read all of your favourite CD Titles at over 600kb per second and by inserting the low cost 650mb cartridges you have 650mb of storage space always on the line just like a conventional hard drive.



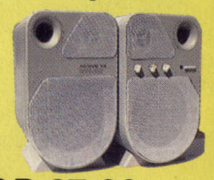


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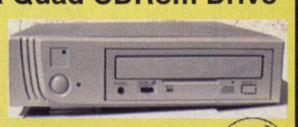
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Premier Vision's Humanoids and Warthogs

Premier Vision have told *AUI* of the arrival of humanoids!(Watch out! They may be coming for you!) This software package contains four models of human beings, a man, strong man, woman and child. The models come as pre-assembled hierachies for real effects, with poses and motion through walking and running files. The humanoids have expressions for smile, grimace, angry and scared(they've seen the Editor coming!) and are fully compatible with each other for morphing.(Compatible for morphing? Is that something to do with the CD Sex Encyclopaedia?) You can even make a man gradually change into a woman - whatever turns you on! Price £170.00.

Premier Vision, because of the shortage of Amigas have been providing their clients, many in the graphics business, who want to render complicated images at the speed of light, astonishingly fast DEC Alpha -based machines in a configuration called, we kid you not, Warthog. The Warthog series comprises a 166MHz, a 233MHz and 275MHz version. Yes, they aren't misprints, up to 275MHz. Warthog is claimed to run up to 30 times faster than a Pentium 90. And that sounds pretty fast to us!

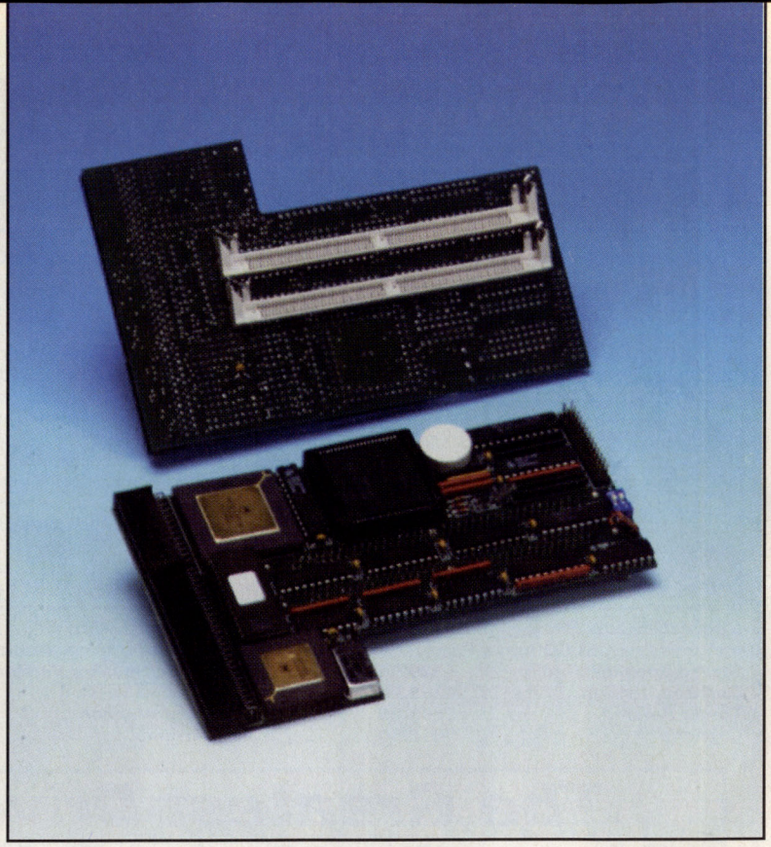
You might remember that a couple of years or more back, NewsFile, to many people's surprise ran an item on the fastest chip around. What could that be of possible interest to Amiga users was one comment. But as ever, *AUI* was ahead of the crowd. The DEC Alpha is now acknowledged as the speediest kid on the CPU block. And as a substitute for absent Amigas, Premier Vision will tell you that they are selling all they can get and customers love them. This is the sort of opposition, really high-end, that the Amiga has to take on and beat if it is really to make a come back in a big way.

If you want to know more about techniques for creating high-end 3D logo animations, Premier Vision are also offering Pro Flying Logo Techniques. This video is presented by Tony Stutterheim, a professional Lightwave artist and covers all sorts of amazing techniques so you can create streaking/flying animations with ease.

And finally, the busy bees at Premier Vision have announced Pixel 3D Pro Version 2 for £129. Premier Vision are claiming this to be the most powerful 3D object/logo utility available. You can use PixPro2 to convert bitmap pictures of logos and shapes into 3 dimensions. PixPro2 can load and save and display 17 different 3D file formats.

For all these sexy goodies, including the not so sexily-named Warthog - each to his own taste though and we're sure that lady warthogs can be thrilling to boy warthogs if not to us - talk to Premier Vision.

Contact: Premier Multimedia Ltd., The Foundary, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EN. Tel: 0171 721 7050.



Speeding up the 1200.

Apollo Accelerators

Siren Software have told *AUI* that they are supplying the Apollo range of accelerators for Amigas. The Apollo 1230 Turbo 50 is the top of the range accelerator for the A1200. Priced at £269.99 the trapdoor fitting accelerator runs at just under 10 MIPS (million instructions per second).

It features full 68030 with MMU at 50mhz, two industry standard 72 pin SIMM sockets, with each SIMM socket taking up to 32Mb SIMMs. SIMM sizes can be mixed.

All items come with a 12 month warranty. Siren also supply SIMM modules and FPUs for the accelerators.

Contact: Siren Software, 178 Bury New Road, Whitefield, Manchester M45 6QF. Tel: 0161 796 5279.



Low price for a richer sound.

Sony's Richer Sound

Sony are jumping on the multimedia bandwagon having brought out a new range of speakers for desktop computer users who, they claim, need richer sound quality for the sophisticated games and educational software.(Can't be thinking of their own upcoming Playstation, can they?)

The SRS-PC30 (£49.00) and 50 (£69.00) models come supplied with a bracket, for easy attachment to the monitor, or they can be freestanding. The speakers are magnetically shielded to avoid interference with the monitor and can be used with a Walkman or Discman.

Also in the range is the Sony speaker box, CSS-B100T (£85.00) which fits underneath a standard 15" or 17" monitor.

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External hard drive enclosure for the A500/A500+. The controller allows you to use a 3.5" IDE hard drive and the optional Apollo A520 accellerator RAM expansion.

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With onboard 28MHz 68020 CPU and 68881 FPU the Apollo 520 accellerator card speeds up your Amiga 500 by 800%. Connects to the 86 pin DMA port with through connector for other peripherals, eg AT500. The 520 can be populated with 1MB or 4MB of FastRAM.

Apollo 520 Turbo Box £149.99

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IDE-controller for the A1500/A2000. The most cost efective way of adding a hard drive to your system.

- IDE controller

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APOLLO ACCELLERATORS

SCALA MM400

CompuGraphic Fonts
Stretch
ScalaType Scale

The past year has been tough for the Amiga as the proverbial spot light gradually dimmed and talk heightened concerning the PC version of Scala as fears grew that MM300 would be the last version to appear on the Amiga.

Well, things are looking brighter for the Amiga and Scala have actually been working on MM400 over the past year as well as the potentially massive PC version due for release about now. MM400 is available as an upgrade, or new as a complete package, and has many added features and a few bug fixes too.

Scala's reputation for multimedia authoring and video presentation is unrivalled thanks to sheer simplicity. After a long wait the latest version is now available and Gary Fenton examines what it has to offer.



It's now possible to automatically kern certain fonts.



The file shuffler, like the main shuffler, can be in up to 256 colours.

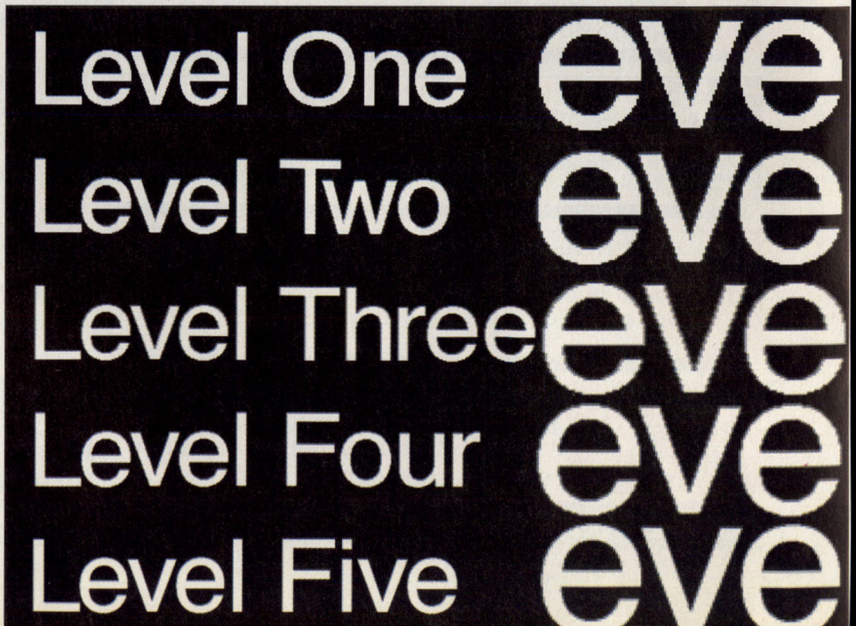
Truly Fontastic!

The most notable new feature is the arrival of ScalaType fonts. This is a dynamic font engine which works using regular Amiga outline fonts (AKA CompuGraphic rescalable fonts) and allows you to resize fonts on the fly using the mouse. Double clicking on the text will activate a box around the text with drag handles on each side. Dragging these resizes the text as soon as you release the mouse button. It's very fast and sometimes instantaneous, and just as quick as working with bitmap fonts.

Outline fonts aren't limited to proportional scaling because Scala will allow you to stretch fonts horizontally or vertically, making tall skinny text and short fat text as easy to create as regular proportionally sized text. Normal bitmap fonts can also be scaled using this new font engine. Unfortunately it's not possible to distort the aspect ratio of bitmap fonts, and they easily become pixelised (blocky).

With ScalaType fonts comes a new level of anti-aliasing - level 5. This is the best level yet and is for the very first time on par with Broadcast Titler's excellent anti-aliased fonts. Level 5 takes a tad longer to compute than the other levels of anti-aliasing because, to use a laymen's term, it's proper anti-aliasing! This renders beautifully smooth and flicker free text no matter how huge or tiny the point size is. Scala deserves a rapturous round of applause for finally providing a top notch level of anti-aliasing which works with standard Amiga outline fonts.

Another feature of the new font engine is automatic kerning of outline fonts. This means that words like "WAVE" no longer have the W, A and V spaced widely apart. Scala will draw these letters closer together making them much more pleasing to the eye. I've only got kerning to work with CGTimes and CGTrium-virate fonts which came with WB2+. It just doesn't seem to work with the other CG fonts I have.



Five levels of anti-aliasing. Level 5 is immeasurably better than previous Scala efforts.

Shuffle Up

The Shuffler and File Shuffler can now display colour thumbnails of files and

The excellent new ScalaType font engine.

Scala pages. This makes the pages much more recognisable than before which limited you to black and white thumbnails. It's fair to say that it's quicker to work using colour images because you can instantly differentiate between the numerous pages you may have.

SnapFiles

SnapFiles is a clever invention which (optionally) automatically saves resized brushes and dithered or remapped images as IFF files on your hard disk. This dramatically speeds up scripts and page editing because Scala can simply load in the SnapFiles instead of having to compute scaled brushes, dithering, and optimised palettes every time that page is called up.

A link is retained with the original image files allowing you to edit them and work with the original image data so you would never lose image quality. I'm especially pleased about this feature because I suggested it to Scala two years ago!

EX-ceptional!

Scala have recognised the need to support multiple file formats and MM400 includes modules (called EXes) which add support for BMP, PCX, TIFF, GIF, and PhotoCD image formats. There's also a FLC EX which allows Scala to run the popular PC

animation formats, FLI and FLC.

A DataType EX (at last!) lets Scala use the Amiga's DataTypes which provides an extensive degree of format compatibility. For example, if you have a JPEG DataType installed then Scala will be able to load JPEG images.

A "Multi" EX adds support for MacroSystem's MultiPic library allowing Scala to read IFF Deep, RGB8, YUV, PGM and other format's support by the library which is supplied with most of MacroSystem's software.

Another new EX is the CD32 EX which supports playback of MPEG video and digital audio. This is good news if you need to incorporate MPEG video in your scripts. Sadly there aren't any CD32 FMV modules in stock anywhere, so people interested in MPEG on CD32 will have to wait and see if Escom plan to start production again of FMV modules. Let's hope they do.

Other EXs include support for VLab and FrameMachine digitisers. This essentially lets you grab a video frame directly into a Scala page without having the hassle of loading the digitiser's own software, grabbing, saving, and then loading into Scala. If you have a VCR EX installed then Scala will bring up a VCR control panel so you can directly control your VCR and find the right frame to grab. Scala also mention the possibility of adding scanner EXess in the future. Let's hope they do!

The final new EX is for the Neptun genlock which has built-in alpha keying. The EX provides control over the various key modes and levels and allows automatic fading.

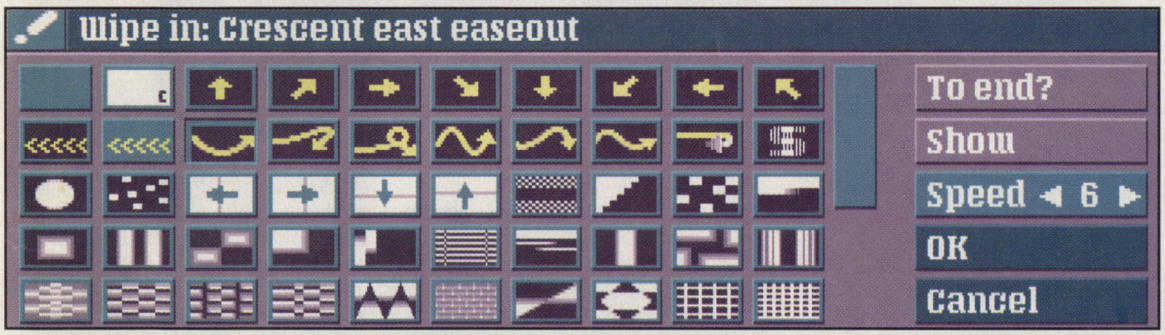


The main shuffler using 32 colours.

New Wipes

Woah, steady boy! Nothing so incredible it's worth wetting your pants about, but seven new wipes have been added to the line wipe menu. They are all very similar to each other and provide curved motion paths for text and brushes to follow. So instead of having text coming in following a straight line, you can now get it to move in a non-linear, curved fashion.

Paths include arcs, boomerang, loop, sinus, and damped. Using the keypad you can select anyone of 8 compass directions for the text/brush to come on to the screen from. It can make scripts much more fun to watch but be careful not to overuse these new wipes for the sake of using them!



Seven new line wipes allow curved paths for flying in text and brushes.

Sadly there aren't any new page wipes. It's a shame because Scala could have pinched some nice ideas from MediaPoint and VideoStage.

Palette

Colours in the palette on the page editor can now be locked so important colours aren't lost when you use the Optimise feature. Sometimes a crucial colour is changed during the palette optimisation process. Thanks to this handy feature you can simply double click on the colour from the palette menu and that colour will remain locked regardless.

The selectable anti-alias colour from the palette menu has now gone and replaced with a new system which uses the first colour of the palette as the background anti-alias colour. I first thought this was madness because of the restrictions it would impose. However, a small "read_me" file on the installation disk explained that instead you can manually select the colour to anti-alias to for each individual line of text. This is a significant improvement over MM300 which should have been disclosed in the printed manual.

The only disadvantage of this new system is that some MM300 scripts are rendered with horrendous looking text when loaded into MM400. This has to be corrected manually, either by doing this in Scala or editing the script file in a text editor.

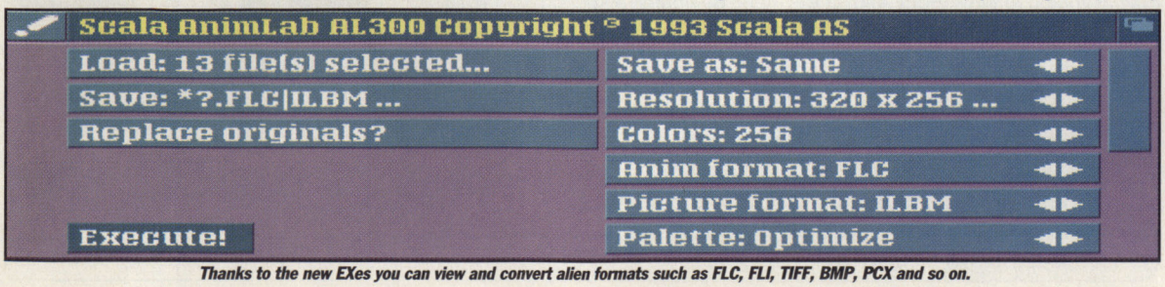
Conclusion

I'd like to conclude by mentioned some annoying features (I didn't say bugs) in the release version of MM400. When using an outline font, remains of the cursor are sometimes left behind as you move the cursor up and down with the cursor keys. However, these left overs aren't shown when the script is run or refreshed (by hitting F10). Very occasionally the cursor disappears when using an outline font and things get confusing.

A frustrating problem for me is when I'm browsing through music and sound files using the file requester, I hit SHOW to listen to the file and nothing happens. Two other people with MM400 tell me they don't have this problem. Well, it doesn't work on my Amiga 4000, but MM300 works fine! Also, on one incident I saved five pages as IFF images and one of them was only half saved. It also crashed a couple of times in a week with intensive use.

There are still some features which Scala should have, like animbrush support and cut and paste editing of pages from the main menu. With these still being awaited I sincerely hope Scala continue to develop for the Amiga...

Overall, the £50 upgrade fee is well worth the excellent ScalaType font engine, the new EXes and the new wipes. The few problems I've mentioned are only minor and shouldn't at all deter you from upgrading, although I suggest they investigate them and provide a free update if necessary. But at the end of the day Scala have again confirmed their place as king of the multimedia and video titling domain. ***AUI***



Thanks to the new EXes you can view and convert alien formats such as FLC, FLI, TIFF, BMP, PCX and so on.

RATINGS

Scala MM400

FEATURES	95%
PERFORMANCE	87%
DOCUMENTATION	92%
EASE OF USE	96%
VALUE FOR MONEY	93%

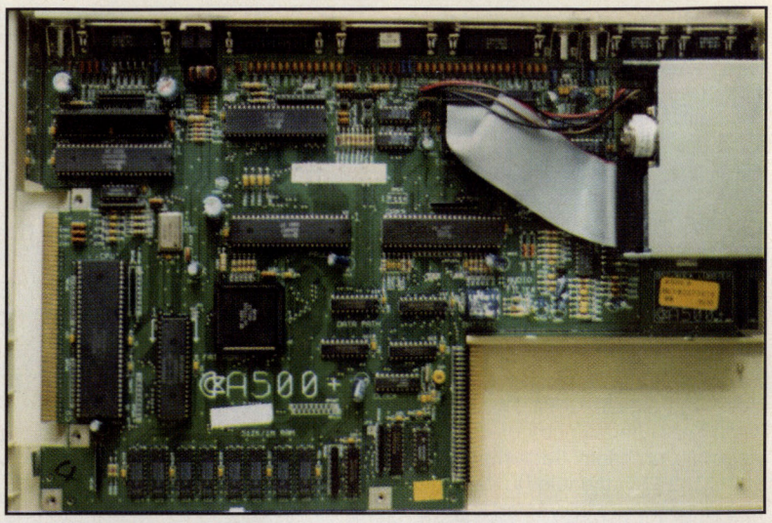
Overall Rating 91%

INFO

Price: £299, or
£50 upgrade from MM300.
Contact: Scala UK
Mill Studio, Crane Mead
Ware, Herts SG12 9PY
Tel: 01920 444294

OS3.1

Mark Blackham and Gideon Overhead exclusively examine the much-talked about Amiga OS3.1.



The A500 motherboard. Take care to replace the new ROM exactly where the old one sat.

AUI first came across OS3.1 when it made its UK debut at the World of Amiga show in December 1994. The show was notable for previews of products which subsequently failed to cause the revolution their publicists promised.

OS3.1 looked promising. With Commodore in disarray, it was the last chance many Amiga users would have to upgrade their system.

AUI was subsequently inundated with calls from readers wanting to know whether OS3.1 was legitimate and worthwhile. We asked Blittersoft, the official UK distributor of OS3.1, for a copy. Six months later we finally wangled an A500 version off them.

New Power

OS3.1 offers the facility for any Amiga to tap even more powerful and rapid graphics rendering, use CD-ROMs as devices, include foreign languages within the Workbench operation, automatically recognise a large bunch of picture and sound datatypes, and, with CrossDos built in, read MS-DOS and Atari disks.

In addition it provides new screen modes and support for graphic boards like the Picasso II, a slightly improved Graphical User Interface with easier colour selection, and an on-line AmigaGuide.

This updated version of AmigaDOS is Commodore/Amiga legal - in fact, the manual and material is all copyrighted to Commodore. So there are no worries in that respect.

Unpacking OS3.1 is almost like opening up your new Amiga all over again. There are three manuals - Workbench, DOS and ARexx. There's a shower of shiny new system disks (installer, Workbench, extras, locate, storage etc). Along with a quick reference guide, there is a simple sheet explaining the method of installing the new ROM.

Hardware

Here's the rub. You must install a new ROM chip onto your motherboard for the computer to recognise some of the novel instructions. This you either get a trained technician to do, or you attempt yourself.

We warn you now, that it is incredibly easy to get the installation wrong, especially with the appalling instruction sheet provided. Getting it wrong can, and probably will, result in horrendous and permanent damage to the other



The old A500 ROM chip and new OS3.1 version. Identical outside - vastly different inside.

chips on the motherboard. It's likely that the new ROM itself will also be damaged in the process.

The ROM comes safely encased in a plastic cover. You pull out the old chip from its seat, which will require some yanking and knife-levering if you haven't got a chip-puller tool (who has?). Pay VERY careful attention to exactly where the pins sat.

Replace the new ROM chip in exactly this position and everything should be fine. With the casing off, power up the Amiga. If there is no boot-up, tap the top of the chip. If the black rectangle is bloody hot, switch everything off immediately. It's likely the damage has been done. Sigh, slump your shoulders and contact Blittersoft for a new ROM chip.

AUI would recommend that if you want to attempt the installation yourself, and you may not find it all that easy, ask Blittersoft for clearer instructions - even over the phone as you physically (hysterically?) install the chip.

Software

Now it's time to install the new DOS - which will fully replace your current Workbench. That means you should notice next to no difference in the way your system looks and runs. All the same commands and methods of control are still there. You simply have the extra power waiting underneath everything for you, or your software, to access.

Installation is the same as usual - using the supplied installer. Remember to read the first part of the manual, and be prepared to choose your language, locale, monitor type and such like.

Conclusion

With the Amiga's future looking uncertain a few months ago, OS3.1 was an attractive option for those wanting to milk a little more from their Amiga.

Even then it could only be considered as a slight improvement on 3.0, which came with the A1200. Maybe the price is an acceptable one for the access to CD-ROM support. Unless you're an intensive graphics and graphics board user, there isn't much more to recommend handing over the dosh.

Owners of A500 and 2000s will find OS3.1 an indispensable way of obtaining the power of the newer AGA machines (without, of course, AGA).

Now, with Amigas back in production, it could be that a new operating system may emerge and you might be able to upgrade your whole machine. Don't hold your breath though because computer companies prefer users to buy new machines and rarely encourage them to upgrade. It isn't so profitable for the manufacturers. Perhaps you would be best advised to think carefully before you spend the cash to buy this system unless you really feel that its going to be what you need and then it might be worthwhile. ***AUI***

AmigaDOS

AmigaDOS is the Disk Operating System, managing the way your computer manipulates data and controls computer functions. It controls the filing and storage system and interfaces with devices like hard drives, printers and modems.

If you go to the "About" item in the menu on your Workbench, you will see that it displays information about your System, the Workbench and Kickstart Version. So what is the difference between Workbench and Kickstart? Kickstart is the ROM and contains the entire operating system. Workbench is the WIMP (Windows Icon Mouse Pointer) based GUI which we all use and love.

One of the most successful aspects of the Amiga has been its operating system. Carl Sassenrath, its creator, should be praised endlessly for what he developed. The envy of any computer platform, the Amiga OS enables users to do things PCs never could such as proper pre-emptive multitasking, long file names, special video modes, the list goes on. Let's hope it continues to be developed further by ESCOM.

RATINGS

Measured on the OS3.1 not AmigaDOS itself.

FEATURES	70%
PERFORMANCE	88%
DOCUMENTATION	87%
EASE OF USE	40%
VALUE FOR MONEY	55%

Overall Rating 70%

INFO

Price: A500/2000 £84.95
A1200/3000/4000 £94.95
Contact: Blittersoft
6 Drakes Mews,
Crownhill
Milton Keynes
MK8 0ER
Tel: 01908 261 466



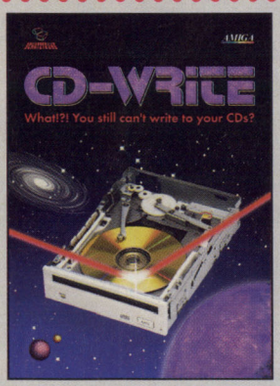
Aminet 6

Aminet CD 6, dated June 1995, consists of approximately 1,1 gigabytes of software in 3600 archives. Since the release of Aminet CD 5 more than 540 MB new software has appeared. The current edition has a special focus on demos, more than 1800 demos from Aminet were included. User friendly access software make the Aminet CD 6 a pleasure to use. **£14.95**



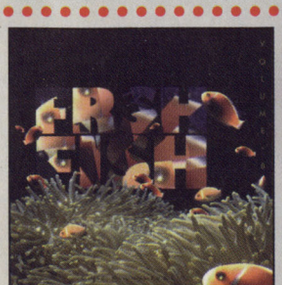
Aminet Set 1

Aminet is the world´s largest collection of freely distributable Amiga software. Up to 10.000 users access the vast archives every day and countless programmers publish directly via Aminet. Until recently access to Aminet was restricted to international network users. With Aminet Set 1, consisting of 4 CDs, the complete archive is published the first time. This CD-ROM-collection, which is dated January 1995, offers an almost inexhaustible reservoir of top-value Shareware. A wide variety of programs is included: Applications, Games, Demos, Pictures, Mods, Animations, Developer-Material, ... It contains approximately 4 gigabytes of software in 12.500 archives and you will enjoy the comfortable user-interface. **£29.95**



CD-Write

What!?! You still can't write to your CDs? CD-ROMs have long been an essential part of Amiga computing. Many users already own a CD-ROM drive, and the number of software packages available on CD is increasing steadily. Until now, though, it was not possible to write to CDs. We have solved this problem with our new revolutionary product: Ralph Babel and Stefan Ossowski's Schatztruhe are proud to present what can be considered a marvel of technology: CD-Write enables you to virtually write to CDs with an ordinary CD-ROM drive. From now on, you will be able to write, delete, and modify data on your CDs. This product will take you into a new era, and you will be able to utilize CD-ROM technology to its fullest. **£44.95**



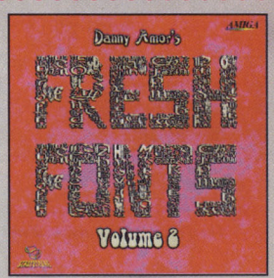
FreshFish 8

The FreshFish CD-ROM-series, produced directly by Fred Fish, provides Amiga users with hundreds of megabytes of the latest freely redistributable software. Published approximately every two months, each volume is a two CD set containing new submissions since the latest volume, as well as an ever growing selection of tools, libraries, documentation and other useful material that is updated with every release. **£29.95**



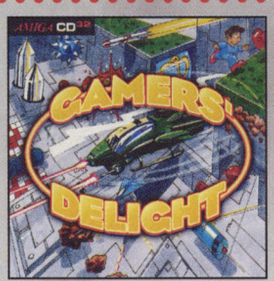
CDBoot 1.0

CDBoot is a fantastic new product that enables you to use almost any CD32 games on an A1200 or A4000 (with AT- or SCSI-CD-ROM drive and any filesystem). You can create a configuration file for each CD, containing information on the Joypad emulation. You can also save the highscore of each CD32 game. The usage and installation of CDBoot is very easy, also for beginners, due to the excellent English manual. Since the compatibility is very high, you can use 98% of CD32 games currently available. CDBoot is an excellent software solution for all Amiga-Freaks, who would like to enter the world of CD32 games! **£34.95**



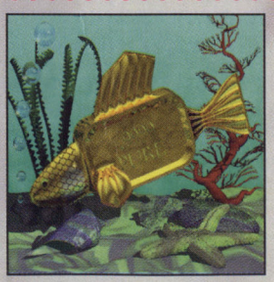
FreshFonts II

The FreshFonts II CD-ROM contains 632 megabytes of fonts for almost any computer system. Most of the fonts are freely distributable, except for the Thienen fonts, which are exclusive on this CD. Each of these fonts is included in four different formats: DMF, Agfa IntelliFont, Adobe and TrueType. There are 231 font families on this CD (each containing of up to 8 different styles). They are classified in seven categories: Deco (63 families), Non-Latin (33 families), Pictures (16 families), Sans Serif (29 families), Script (36 families), Serif (36 families), Thienen (19 families). **£19.95**



Gamers' Delight

This CD contains 40 games for the Commodore Amiga from differing categories. Action, Jump & Run, Card Games, Puzzles, Strategy Games - a whole range of computer entertainment awaits! Gamers´ Delight will hold you captivated for hours and guarantees long-lasting pleasure. All games are commercial versions - no public domain & no demos! This CD can be run on any Amiga with CD-ROM drive, CDTV or Amiga CD32 Console with 1 MB free memory and Joystick/Joypad. **£29.95**



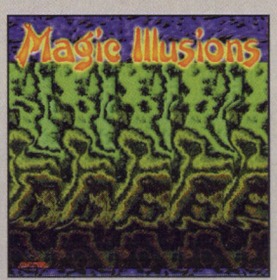
GoldFish 2

Volume 2 of the GoldFish series contains a selection of software, animations, pictures and other material released on FreshFish CD-ROM's between October 1993 and November 1994, with most of the material updated to the latest available versions. All material is included in both archived (BBS-ready) and unarchived (ready-to-run) forms. **£29.95**



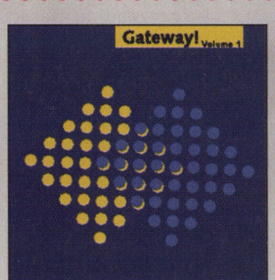
LIGHT ROM

The LIGHT ROM CD contains almost 650 megabytes of 3D objects, images, images equences, scene files, surface attributes, bump maps and textures in IFF and TARGA formats, DEMs, and Lightwave related text files. LIGHT ROM is an invaluable resource for Lightwave users, and as a bonus, includes material for Sculpt 3D and Imagine users. **£44.95**



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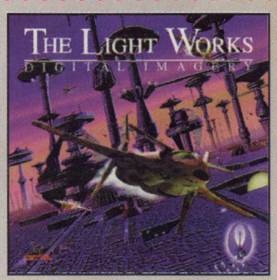
Gateway!

Gateway! offers NetBSD 1.0, a full featured UNIX-like operating system with both sources and binaries for the Amiga, i386, Sun 3, and other architectures. Go netsurfing with the large selection of supplied networking tools. Other supplied packages include a binary release of the X window system (X11R6) for the Amiga, with many additional clients, and packages such as perl, emacs, games, mail programs, and many megabytes of important text files such as RFCs and FAQs. A complete installation guide is available on the CD. There are also some AmigaDOS internet utilities, such as clients for AmiTCP and Envoy. **£9.95**



Meeting Pearls Vol. II

The Meeting Pearls Volume II contains 650 MB of the finest FD software via a special user interface, which has been created to allow you to find the program of your choice with ease. The contents: 35 MB of selected html-pages - 50 MB graphics programs and data -15 MB games - 10 MB from "The Party '94" - 13 MB disk, hard disk - CD-ROM and SCSI tools - 19 MB various other tools - 11 MB educational software - 25 MB terminal programs - 25 MB animations, mainly from Eric Schwarz - 40 MB developer tools (e.g. pre-installed compiler (DICE, Oberon, Modula), Commodore-Includes, GUI-Tools) - 9 MB music programs - 10 MB midi programs - 27 MB pictures - 60 MB texts, FAQs, CD contents files, etc. - 40 MB linux for Amiga - 100 MB TeX installation (PasTeX incl. 600 dpi and fax fonts) - 38 MB movie data base - 50 MB archives for Psion - 18 MB modules - 50 MB NetBSD for Amiga, ... **£9.95**



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All products are available in your local Amiga-shop or through national mail-order-companies

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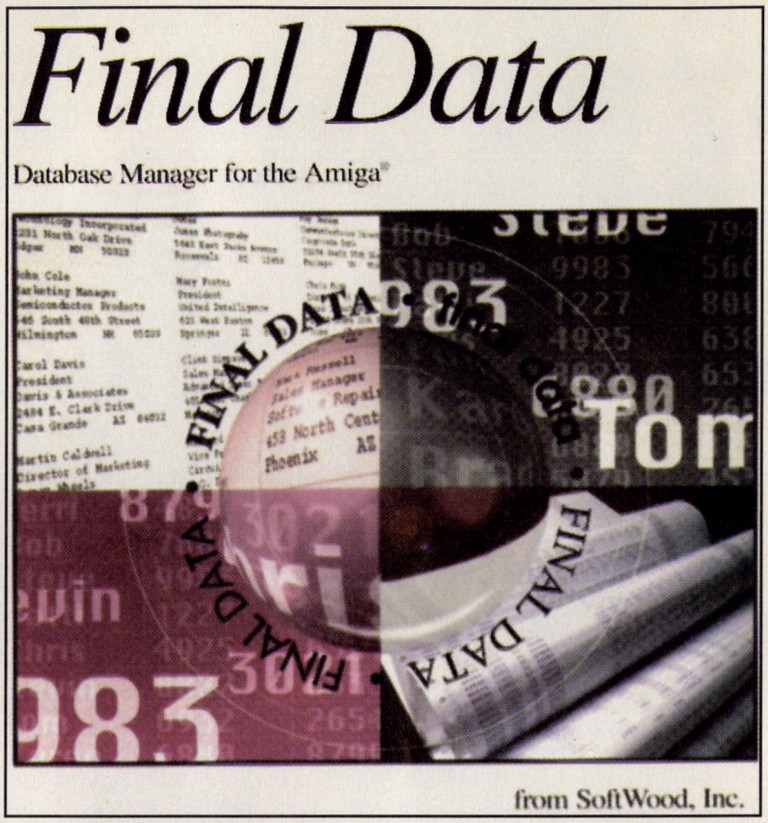
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CHIARI OFFICE - 1995

Final Data 2

Final Data 1 wasn't the final word in databases. Mark Blackham assesses whether the new update is an improvement.



Final Data 2 - the updated version has now been released with extra features.

Call me skeptical but I'm prone to suspicion about software updates out on the shelves incredibly quickly after the original release.

You'd think that the release of updates shows a commitment to refining and building a solid product - wouldn't you? Not necessarily. Follow-up sales via updates are a good way of obtaining added value from your product. Hold a few nifty bits back from the first version and pack them into an update some months later...

The commercial realities are that you have to get the program out at some stage - with or without those extra bits the programmers would like to add but haven't the time. If companies held back and added the extra bits, the programmers would think of other things they'd like to add, and you'd never get the darn software out at all.

The QUERY requester lets you search using all manner of variables.

With those facts in mind I analysed version two of Final Data, the flat-file database from Softwood. The original program came out at the end of last year - which makes it a mere six months between that and this substantially revamped version.

Is that an acceptable period to avoid the suspicion of cynical people like myself?

I have seen too many application software releases recently which were clearly not complete. The products work and do the job they were designed for, but clearly lack many things which would make them truly useful.

You may recall my initial assessment in the February issue of ***AUI*** (68%) when I slammed Final Data for being far too basic. Six months later my opinion has mellowed somewhat, helped by this extremely well-produced update. Finally, Final Data is looking like a useful product.

The format takes on the familiar Lotus123 spreadsheet view, with rows and columns forming cells. You are able to enter information into each cell, then use the program to analyse and manipulate the data. The standard procedure is to set up columns classified according to the information you are assessing. A list of your videos for example will include a column of titles, actors, producers, directors, running time, rating and comments. Each row will represent information on each video.

Powerful Update

The power of the updated version is that the functions and operations you can perform on the information are very substantial.

Running calculations are now possible. Each video running time, to continue the example, would auto-matically add to a total running time column.

To achieve this you define a column as an RCalc datatype column and define the Calc options, what other cells or columns it looks at to perform the desired calculation.

Annoyingly, the addendum manual does not give examples of how to set up these calculations. I worked some out for myself, but only after some try-and-see messing about. The previous manual suffered from the same problem, so it's dis-concerting to see it occur again.

Finally, Final Data is looking like a useful product.

Another new facility is the memo datatype. This lets you place unrestricted amounts of text 'in' a cell. The memo cells have stars in them, indicating memo text is attached. clicking on the cell pulls up a window of scrollable text.

The Query requester lets you define a substantial amount of information for a search of your database. Say you wanted to find every movie in your video collection that starred James Stewart, but you were particularly interested in those post 1950 but before 1962. The traditional FIND option cannot do this, but the QUERY requester lets you search using all manner of variables.

A very sensible addition is the ability to select multiple whole columns or rows, for performing operations like Mail-Merges and printing. The previous release let you do this too, but the columns and rows had to be next to each other. Now you can choose any of them to select information you'd like to print, merge into letters or copy and paste.

Now, for full mastery of a huge growing database, you'll want to conduct a regular inventory. For example, you will no doubt want to search for or sort, and print out, all the science fiction movies in your video collection. As your collection grows, you may need to do this regularly, so a special VIEW category allows you to establish pre-set activities. Once the sort or search is established, you don't need to go through the rigmarole of setting up the definitions each time. Just select the user-defined VIEW, and Final Data will automatically do the action.

Facilities

So far I've been using common, everyday examples of how you might use Final Data. These facilties are exceptionally powerful for professional use. A database of customers, for example, can be scanned for lapsed subscriptions or those who have not bought something for a period of time. Professionals will find that the inclusion of new and modified ARexx commands, makes Final Data very powerful indeed and flexible too.

Conclusion

The extra capabilities of Final Data 2 should have been in the original release. Nevertheless, they are now here, and make this database very useful and very clever.

Accordingly, my assessment of the program has improved considerably. I still prefer a database like Digita's DataStore, but Final Data 2 certainly meets the needs of those who want a spreadsheet-like manipulation of their data. I'm now impressed. ***AUI***

RATINGS

Final Data 2

FEATURES	79%
DOCUMENTATION	80%
EASE OF USE	74%
VALUE FOR MONEY	76%

Overall Rating 78%

INFO

Price: £39.95
or £9.95 to registered users of Final Data 1
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NOTE: 2.5" drives come with fitting kit for A1200 and CD32 SX – 1 module.
3.5" drives can be fitted into A1200. Fitting kit costs £15 when bought with drive.

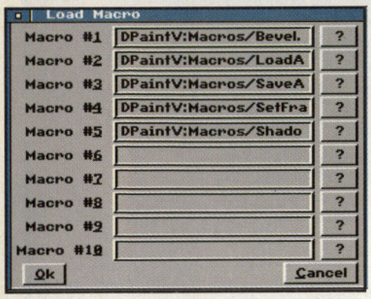
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Deluxe Paint V



DPaint demo picture showing what you can achieve with the natural media tools.



DPaint lets you store your own macros and assigns them to F keys.

Deluxe Paint has been with the Amiga since the early days and was last released as version IV in 1992. Gary Fenton test drives its latest incarnation.

If it weren't for DPaint then it's a possibility that the Amiga wouldn't have taken off the way that it did all those years ago. DPaint deserves respect because of that and the powerful yet simple drawing tools it offered to artists of all calibres. There have been quite a few new painting packages since DPaint IV was released so version V needs a lot of extra features, power, and accessibility to keep ahead of the competition.

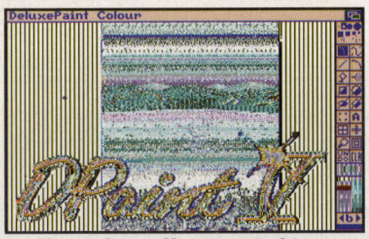
Rexx Up Doc!

The first place to look for new features is in DPaint's menus, where we discover a healthy improvement. In addition there are even two new menus, Macros, and User. These are to support DPaint's new ARexx features which include its own ARexx port for the first time and recordable macros. It's possible to control virtually every aspect of DPaint using ARexx compatible software and/or scripts.

Macros can be automatically recorded directly within DPaint and saved to disk to be used at a later date. Suppose you wanted DPaint to automatically sign your name on a picture. You'd turn on "Record Macro" and then select the free hand draw tool and draw your name. As you do this DPaint is quietly writing an ARexx script describing what you're doing. You can assign this macro to a function key and/or save it to disk. Recalling this macro will make DPaint write your name automatically in front of your eyes. This is a simple example but complex processes are possible with a bit of imagination and understanding of this powerful language. The manual covers ARexx with references to every available command.

Buffered

Since DPaint has been away other packages have heralded true 24 bit buffers. This means that whatever you draw is internally computed with 24 bit (16 million colour) accuracy. This prevents a degradation in image quality when parts of the image have been constantly re-worked, and you can save the true 24 bit buffer and view it



The new Camera Move requester lets you animate around large images.

with a 24 bit card on another Amiga or PC. DPaint V has this feature and calls it a "24 bit backing store" which can be turned on and off.

Natural Media

Dedicated graphics computers have had natural media tools for a decade while the Amiga first got serious with basic natural paint effects some 4 years ago. Then in 1992 OpalPaint came out providing an extensive implementation of natural painting tools. More recently Photogenics entered the market with its own array of oil, watercolour and other natural tools.

DPaint V has followed suit with natural media tools including watercolour, oils, chalk, and felt tip drawing effects, and background textures mimicking 50 kinds of natural canvas materials consisting of many fabrics, hairs, rocks, papers, and woods. The media type and texture is selectable from a pull down menu and file requester. The results can be good if you practice using them. Creative inspiration didn't come as easily for me using DPaint's natural tools as it did using Photogenics. I think Photogenics flows much more smoothly than DPaint when it comes to natural tools.

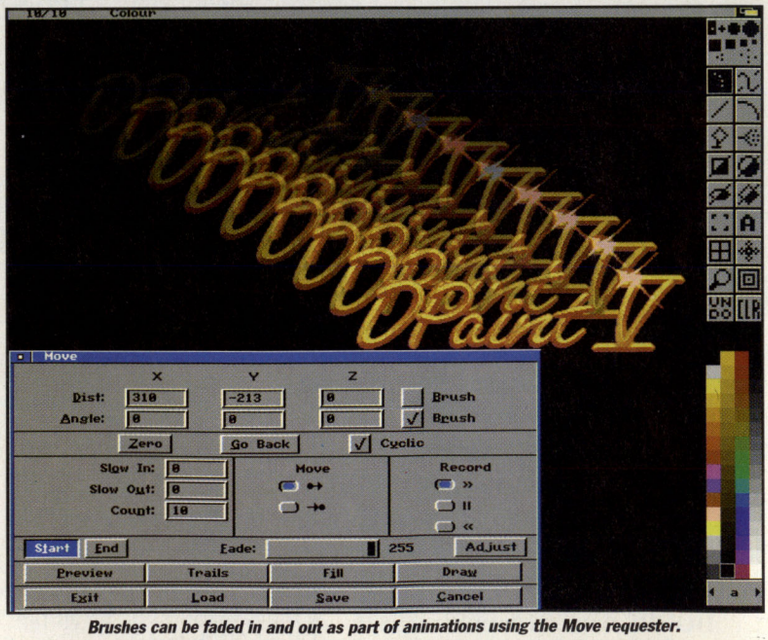
One of the nicest treats for me is the new airbrush which gives a fairly realistic natural spray with adjustable power settings. There's also the old splatter airbrush which previous DPaints have, but this new one is a turn up for the books as DPaint finally gets into the 90's!

Animation

DPaint's classic animation features have been improved with lots of neat extras. For starters, you can load animations of any size so you're not limited to the exact screen resolution any more. And then there's the innovative Camera Move requester which lets you virtually move the camera in all three dimensions. Using this in conjunction with appropriate pictures, you can easily create huge scrolling backgrounds and panning and zooming effects.

The famous Move requester now lets you do key frame animation with more precision as you can place the brush with the mouse for start and end positions (like Brilliance) as an alternative from typing in coordinates. Another feature lets you specify a beginning and end transparency level of the brush for fading it in or out as part of an animation.

Each frame from an animation can now have its own individual palette. Multiple palette support is important because you can include more col-



Brushes can be faded in and out as part of animations using the Move requester.



This picture, which happened to be lying around on my hard drive, demonstrates a few ways to use graduated transparencies.

ours and shades throughout your animation. Complementing this support for a neglected feature of the IFF format is the ability to change the frame rate of each individual frame. This lets you run parts of an animation faster or slower or add pauses wherever you like.

The impressive Light Table has some new options, such as definable dimming levels, and selectable layers (up to 4) for dimming. This makes it even easier for animators to create original and smooth running cell animation.

At last DPaint can save and load animations in the 32 bit format, Anim Op-8 Word and Long. This established animation format plays animations faster than the older Op-5 format which is still supported.

One of the nicest treats for me is the new airbrush which gives a fairly realistic natural spray with adjustable power settings.

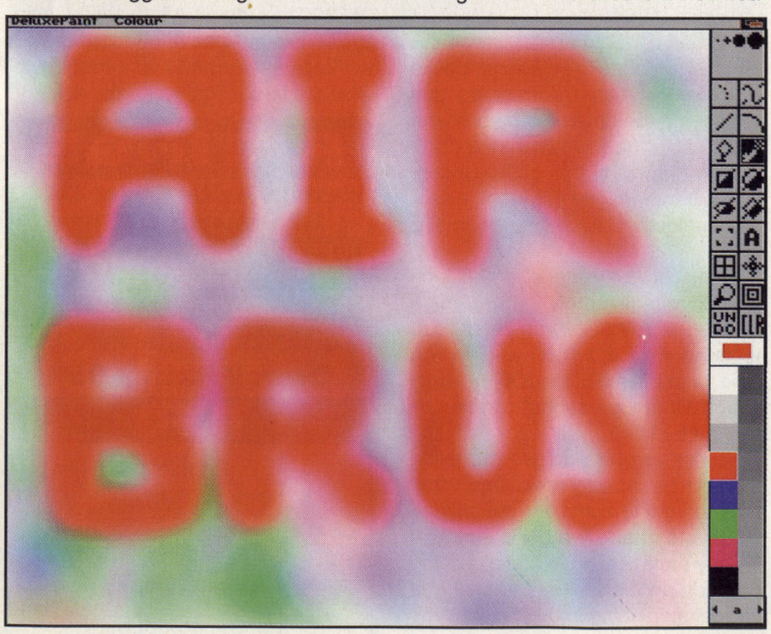
Colourful

The palette editor has had a small face lift with a bigger mixing area and a gradient generator for the mixing area. Both HSV and RGB sliders are visible at the same time, and there's a button to remove or add a small grid around the outside of the colours displayed in small boxes in the palette editor.

The Ranges editor has been changed too with a great new feature allowing you to define gradient transparencies on top of regular colour gradients. Gradient transparencies let you specify how transparent a particular section of the range should be.

For example, suppose you've selected a solid blue colour and create a transparent gradient going from solid (0) to transparent (255) and you draw a rectangle using a vertical fill. The resulting rectangle will be solid blue at the top, slow becoming more transparent nearer the bottom before eventually blending completing into the background. This excellent new feature works with all drawing tools and fill modes which support ranged fills. Unfortunately this doesn't work with fills using brushes.

Sticking with fills, there are now three kinds of dithering available: Random, smooth, and pattern. Smooth uses Floyd Steinberg dithering which is the best available dithering mode.



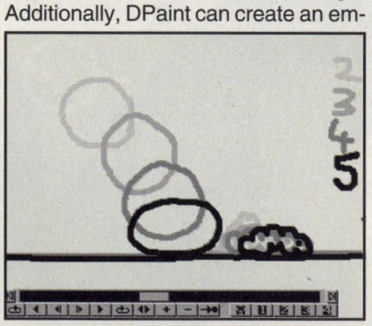
At last DPaint has a proper airbrush!

Other Bits

There are two new brush pickup modes: one lets you manually draw freehand around an image you want to pick it up, and a "magic wand" type of tool will pick up the entire image which is connected by the pixel on which you have clicked.

Printing features are unchanged apart from an option to print out a storyboard of the current animation. This is a decent feature if you have to show someone your ideas in the conventional storyboard format. It's a pity printing wasn't enhanced to support true 8 and 24 bit printing as Personal Paint does.

There's a requester from the Preferences menu which enables icons to be optionally saved along with images. Standard icons can be used or DPaint generate a thumbnail of your picture to be used as the icon image. Additionally, DPaint can create an embedded colour preview image into the saved file. If you save images using this option and then call up the Load requester, hitting F1 will show you a quick preview image of the file you've selected. This is handy as it can save you from loading the whole image, but for some strange reason (a bug?) it won't let you view any more than one preview per visit to the file requester.



The Light Table can be customised to preview any frames using any brightness level.

A new bold status gauge provides continuous visual feedback on DPaint's progress in many operations showing how long you've got to wait. Another helpful thing is a speedometer which is displayed when you press the "s" key showing how fast your animation is playing.

A new Deluxe Player has been written which supports ARexx, multiple palette animations, and it can play animations directly from hard disks for those who don't have enough RAM for larger animations.

Conclusion

DPaint V has most of the features you should expect from a modern paint package which have been agreeably implemented although not everything runs as fast as it should. The manual claims that some code had been optimised for speed but I haven't honestly noticed this.

Animation in DPaint has now overtaken Brilliance in terms of features which is fair considering it was DPaint's strength before Brilliance arrived on the scene. Brilliance still feels much faster than DPaint V in operation and I wish DPaint could have some of the processing tools that Brilliance or even Personal Paint has.



The palette editor has be altered with a slightly larger mixing area.

The new DPaint manual is excellent with plenty of tutorials and explanations which is necessary to deal with the many new features. Disappointingly, DPaint V has crashed a few times when playing with macros which is not a good sign.

I have mixed feelings about DPaint because of the nice new animation, gradient and ARexx features weighed up against the sluggish operation in higher resolutions (even with an 060 CPU!) and lack of file format support. (No DataTypes or JPEG) To conclude, DPaint V is tops once again for animation work, but I'm sticking with Brilliance for most drawing tasks and Photogenics for the static high quality work. But the most famous Amiga program, an old stager now in a sharp new version, is still in there strongly fighting it out for the paint championship of the Amiga. ***AUI***

RATINGS

D-PAINT V

FEATURES	95%
PERFORMANCE	80%
EASE OF USE	89%
DOCUMENTATION	95%
VALUE FOR MONEY	80%

Overall Rating 87%

INFO

Price: £99.99
Contact: Meridian Distribution
East House,
East Rd Industrial Estate
London, SW19 1AH
Tel: 0181 543 3500

Caviar Drive

Gideon Overhead likes the taste of a very special dish on his drive menu.



A couple of months ago I bought a 540 Meg hard drive for my PC. Agghh, yes, I know I shouldn't have said the word PC. It's OK though, I only use it for playing games! It's not a serious computer.

If you own a PC you will know that you have to keep buying bigger and bigger hard drives as the programs take up so much space. Applications and games on the Amiga occupy a fraction of the capacity that a PC prgram requires and a one point two gigabyte, which the Western Digital Caviar hard drive is, may seem a daunting size for an Amiga user.

I took my 540 Meg drive home and found out that the list of problems PCs have seems to go on and on. Because of limitations in the BIOS, Windows and DOS, nearly all PCs can only accept hard drives up to 504mb! What? How can you attach anything bigger? You can attach a SCSI hard drive that doesn't use the BIOS and so is unaffected. But for the PC the controller and drives are quite expensive.

Western Digital, who co-designed the original IDE standard 10 years ago, suggested an extension to this called Enhanced IDE or EIDE. This tweaked a few things and now you can attach large drives to a PC if you have a BIOS that supports them and a special EIDE controller.

That is not all that has improved. EIDE drives are much faster and with the right PC EIDE controller you should be able to transfer up to 11 Megs of data a second. You will only get these speeds when transferring large blocks of data. EIDE drives are still considerably faster than normal IDE drives though.

What does this have to do with the Amiga? EIDE is not a standard yet, if it does become one for the Amiga, we may see these controllers on the new Amigas. These controllers and drives are much cheaper than SCSI controllers and drives and allow up to four EIDE or IDE devices. An EIDE controller is really just two controllers combined allowing two devices on each. A bit of a cheat but it works.

Some people have called the whole shebang "The poor man's SCSI" and there are EIDE controllers and drives soon to be introduced which support transfers of up to 16.7 Megs a second! In the long run SCSI may turn out to be the better option as you can attach additional peripherals such as tape drives and scanners.

You can run IDE drives on an Amiga. As you can run normal IDE drives on a EIDE controller and VESA, er, vice versa, it shouldn't be that much trouble to produce a controller for us, which at present to our knowledge doesn't exist. When it does it should allow the Amiga to utilise the high speeds of EIDE. We will have to wait to see what ESCOM produces.

Fast

Although the Western Digital (WD) Caviar - and that's its name - is EIDE and won't transfer at the high speeds without an EIDE controller, it was still very fast attached to an Amiga. Unlike with the PC, fitting, formatting and partitioning the drive was no problem at all. I soon had two 610 Meg partitions to play with. Using DiskSpeed, the Caviar managed 1.8 Megs a second, the fastest I have seen in an IDE drive.

You can only install a 3.5 inch hard drive legitimately in one Amiga model, the A4000. It, however, can be fitted in the A1200 and in the SX-1, with the aid of the SX-1 Powerstation. Both "operations" can be carried out by Hi-Q.

There are advantages in buying such a large capacity drive. One is that a standard IDE controller will only allow you to attach two devices. If you already have one drive and are going to attach an extra one, you might as well get a drive big enough to last you for some time.

The disadvantages are.. Well, I can't really think of any actually! Price per megabyte is a lot less than a 540 Meg drive, it is very reliable and fast, so I don't see any reason not to get one. If such a drive were damaged, you might well lose a lot of data but with a drive this size you would, of course, make some sort of back up of all your important data, wouldn't you? Yes, of course, you would!

Partitioning

One of the more important things to remember when formatting the drive is partitioning. Using one large 1.2 gig partition is foolhardy because if the drive is corrupted you will have lost all the data. Whereas, if the drive had several partitions you would not have to format the whole disk again.

Conclusion

At £300 including VAT, the WD Caviar 31200 is excellent value for money. It works out at around 40p a megabyte, which is fantastically cheap. ***AUI***

RATINGS

Western Digital Caviar 31200 1.2 Gigabyte IDE Drive

SPEED	90%
PERFORMANCE	90%
EASE OF USE	90%
VALUE FOR MONEY	95%

Overall Rating 95%

INFO

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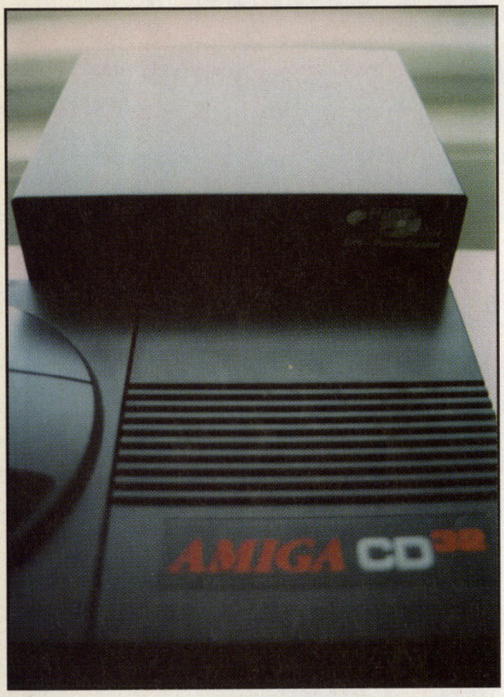
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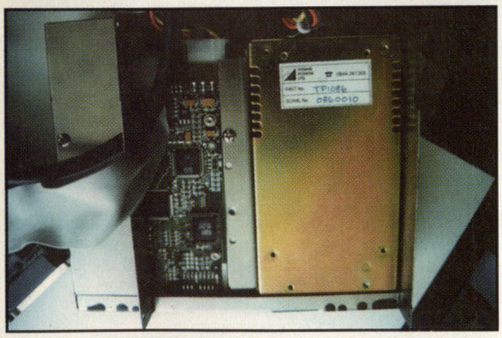
Improving the SX-1, Gideon Overhead finds when test driving HI-Q's new Powerstation, gives the CD-32 add-on a hard drive and solves some of its problems too.



The Sx1 PowerStation, A large box!



A CD32 connector sprouts from the side of the SX1 Powerstation.



Inside, the space is split between a 50 watt power supply (left) and a hard drive (right).

Most people who have invested in a CD32 would have done so purely to play CD games, you could do little else at the time. Later more and more CD titles became available for normal Amiga users who had bought CD-ROM drives whose price has kept falling. This might not have seemed fair. You had a fully working Amiga and all you needed was some I/O ports to connect you with the outside world!

There was good news though because a few months later the SX-1 was released. You could now expand your "games machine" into a fully blown computer. The SX-1 is a box which plugs into the back of the CD32 and offers you the ports of any other Amiga.

The SX-1 although good had two main problems. The first was that you could only install a 2.5 inch hard drive. These are slow, expensive and only come in small capacities.

The second problem was that the CD32 power supply was only really designed to power the unit itself. If you added an SX-1, external disk drive, and hard drive, some users experienced a lack of power which resulted in the unit resetting at random and disk read write errors. All in all not a very reliable system.

Now Hi-Q have solved these problems by releasing the SX-1 Powerstation. This is a box which contains a power supply and a 3.5 inch hard drive. The top of the SX-1 is removed and the Powerstation is bolted on in the the place of the cover. Inside, the space is split between a 3.5" Conner hard drive and power supply. The power supply which is 50 Watts is more than enough for all the peripherals you could possibly want to connect.

The Conner is a well respected brand and the hard drive is very reliable and fast. Using the program DiskSpeed which is more accurate than SYSinfo, I achieved an average transfer rate of 1.5 Megs a second which is a very respectable rate for an IDE drive.

There is a kettle-style connector located in the back of the unit and a CD32 connector sprouts out from the side of the Powerstation. This plugs into the CD unit. You can now turn off the whole system via a switch at the back of the Powerstation which is a lot easier to find than the CD32 version.

I had no power problems when using the Powerstation. It does get a little warm but is well ventilated so that is nothing to worry about. Because of the power cable which sticks out of the back of the unit, it is impossible push the Powerstation tight against a wall which would in any case block the ventilation holes.

Hi-Q has only one problem, the SX-1 is no longer available. The company Paravision which originally made the SX-1 was sold and the company which bought is rumoured to have gone bust. However, there were 10,000 SX-1 units sold worldwide so there is a market out there albeit a limited one.

There was a final problem that the SX-1 had which the SX-1 Powerstation does not address and that is the inclusion of only one 72 pin simm slot. This meant if you wanted to upgrade your 4 Meg simm to 8 Megs, there wasn't room to slot in another simm. Upgrading would mean that your first simm would become redundant.. That is just a little moan and not really what the SX-1 Powerstation was designed to do.

Conclusion

The SX-1 Powerstation makes up for most of the SX-1's limitations. It gives you an ample power supply and a fast reliable 3.5 inch drive. If you already have a 2.5 inch drive installed then don't worry as you can access both.

The only criticism I have is that the Powerstation is a bit of an eyesore. It looks like what it is, a box bolted onto a box, bolted onto the CD32, it doesn't look like it was meant to be there in the first place.

The Hi-Q Powerstation is a compromise, but it works and it works well. You may think that because the SX-1 Powerstation extends a couple of inches to the left of the CD lid that it would stop it opening, it doesn't. The build quality is excellent. It is constructed out of thick metal and is quite heavy. It certainly shows up the cheap plasticky feel of the CD32. ***AUI***

RATINGS

SX1 Powerstation

FEATURES	80%
PERFORMANCE	85%
DOCUMENTATION	90%
VALUE FOR MONEY	80%

Overall Rating 80%

INFO

Price: Powerstation including 540 Meg Conner drive £249.95

Bare unit £129.95

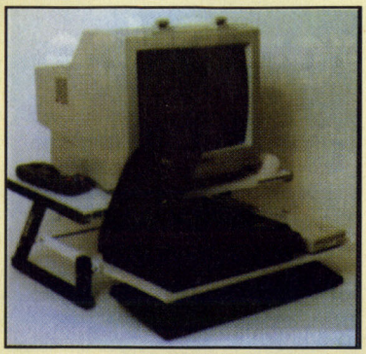
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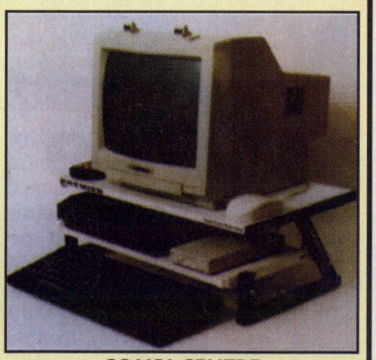
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Creating Space

Mark Blackham test drives two new products to help you really tidy up your computer desk space.



If you can wield a screwdriver, you can assemble the Combi.

How much of your time with the Amiga is spent on workspace maintenance problems like searching for disks or clearing space for your cup of coffee? Aren't you sick of stacking that monitor on a teetering pile of books to raise it to an "ergonomically acceptable" height?

An ordered desk is an ordered and efficient mind (but not necessarily a talented one, we keep telling the boss). Most of us need a little help in this efficiency department, so two new products - the Combi desk unit and Eco Disk Boxes - could come in useful.

Combi Desk Unit

A desk workstation shelf-frame is not only a very good idea, it really does turn your temporary piecemeal set-up into something more professional, efficient and permanent.

Premier Developments have released a new Combi desk unit which is well worth considering to help you get your Amiga hardware in order. Premier have been around for many years, producing workstation stands for Commodore machines since the trusty C64.

Their latest model, the Combi, is a sturdy and stable two-shelf unit taking up space of around 30cm x 54cm, and standing about 18cm high.

The Combi unit is being targeted at the new breed of users who have built up a significant kit around a CD32 - with keyboard, SX1 expansion unit and so on. The unit is also ideal for anyone with an Amiga.

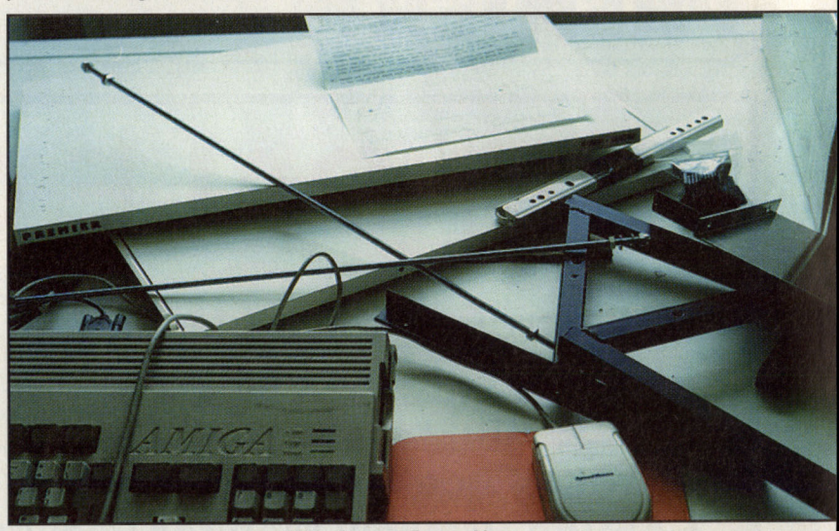
Your monitor stands on the top shelf - elevating it to a sensible height. You should always be looking straight ahead at your monitor, not arching the eyes or neck up or down.

There is probably room either side for a few bits and pieces like joysticks and some other chunks of electronic machinery. You always need that extra corner of space as a 'temporary' resting place for something.

The point of having the monitor on top is that it will help weigh down the unit when you slide out the middle shelf. Even then, the good Premier design makes it unlikely that the thing will topple even without a monitor on top.

The lower shelf itself will fit a CD32 and SX1 unit (there is a special steel extension support at the back). The outward slide and clearance between the top shelf is enough to let you lift the lid of a CD-32.

Your keyboard, or A500, A600, A1200, fits easily underneath the lower sliding shelf. Naturally, you'd only slip part of the Amiga underneath - keeping the keyboard out for use. If your computer desk has multiple uses, this aspect makes it handy for sliding the Amiga clean out of the way.



All the pieces await assembly.

If you have a standard Amiga, the middle shelf is a good place for stacking extra floppy drives, modems, those essential and regularly used disks, and other peripherals. Only the slimmest of printers will fit on the shelf, and even then you'd never be able to access the top.

Assembly

A big part of buying a shelf workstation is the assembly - you have to do it yourself. If you can wield a pen you can wield a screw-driver. If you can wield a screw-driver you can put together the Combi unit.

My natural inclination is to look at the photograph of the finished product, then look at the pieces and then work out in my mind how I assemble them to look like the photo. This attitude is the result of blind machismo combined with years of attempting to follow instructions written by people who don't know how to convey information simply.

It took me 30 seconds to assess on my own how the pieces fitted together to make the shelving. If I'd read Premier's instructions it might have taken me 30 hours. Take a look at the opening paragraph of the instructions:

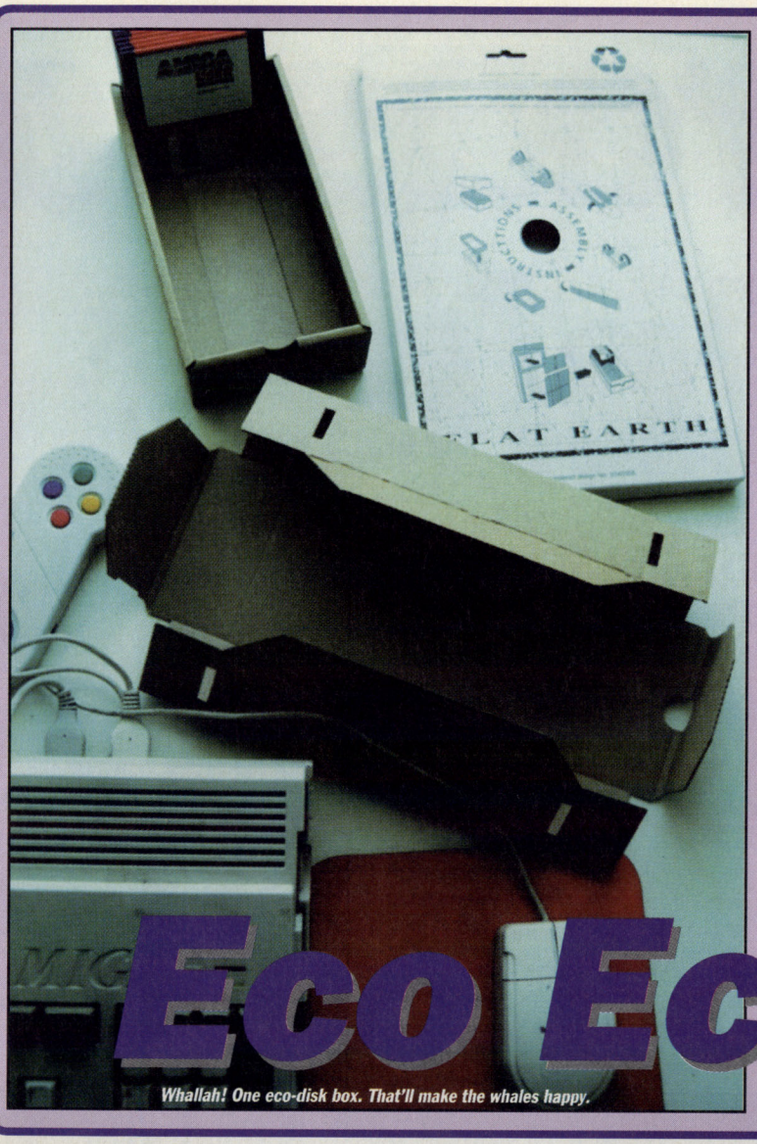
"With 2 flat washers at each end of the two fixing points in each side-member and in between the outer sliding shelf runner and side member (one 6mm item next to the rear face of the runner & one 4mm item against the side member...(sic) to cover excess screw underhead taper, screw outer runners to the side members with 4 of the self tapping screws supplied."

Reading this paragraph a day after I put the unit together I now realise what they mean - too late! Nevermind - the unit was put together quickly and easily with only a cursory glance at the instructions - and that is a good sign.

Watch out when screwing the runners for the sliding shelf onto the main legs. If any of the screw head is left out, the slide wheels will catch and not complete the outward movement.

We struck this exact problem - one screw refused to enter the pre-drilled hole cleanly, and still protrudes annoyingly. Despite this, the shelf still pulls out with only a minor catch. In fact, if the screws are left out further, the

Eco Economy



Whallah! One eco-disk box. That'll make the whales happy.

One of the most humorous daily events in the ***AUI*** office is the tell-tale clatter of an unsteady tower of floppy disks scattering over the floor. Well, it's humorous for those who don't have to suffer that embarrassing and annoying trick of fate...

The bane of our computer-related lives are disks of the uncompiled and unboxed type. Those little blighters that mount up around your desk - always hiding that incredibly important one that was sitting on top of the pile only two minutes ago. Somehow that disk was subsequently swallowed up by the others and now sits at the bottom - if you're lucky.

The answer is obvious, isn't it? We need disk boxes. The trouble is, disk boxes are the types of accessories we don't often buy ourselves, no matter how helpful they can be.

What we need is a cheap disk box that can hold lots of disks and give us quick flippable access to the range, or store them safely for travel, if needed.

The answer appears to be the new "Ecological" disk boxes from Flat Earth. Made of recycled cardboard, these boxes come in a kit form, where you simply bend and shape the thick card into a disk box.

Remarkably, there is no glueing, taping or inserting of "tab A into tab B" required. The box cleverly holds itself together. Keeping with the environmentally-sound theme, even the packing is perforated so you can tear bits of it out for use within the disk boxes.

These bits act as insets to hold the disks upright even when the box isn't full (stops that nasty tendency of disks to slide over on their backs while in the boxes).

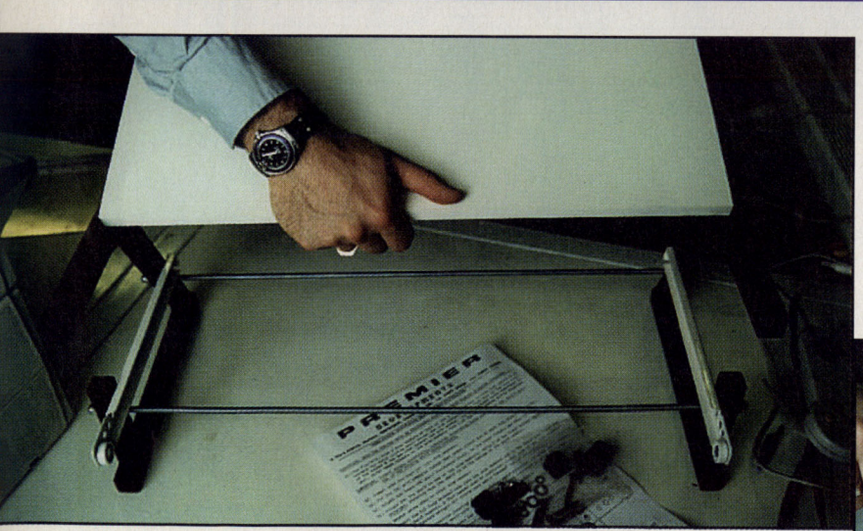
Besides the obvious environmental benefits of using recycled card instead of plastic (non-toxic, renewable resources etc), the boxes are also robust although soft and padded. In addition they are non-static - keeping your disks safe.

Conclusion

Full marks to Flat Earth for an inventive and sensible idea which is well worth the small price.

INFO

PRICE: £2.75 + VAT
Flat Earth, The Custard Factory
Gibb St, Digbeth, Birmingham
B9 4AA England
Tel: 0121 693 7757



Now let's chuck the shelves on the metal frame.

runners can still be jumped over them to complete the slide-out.

Conclusion

Within half an hour you'll have a lovely looking workstation unit sitting on your desk. Your Amiga set-up will be looking better than ever, and all the messy cables and paraphernalia will be tucked safely away.

1. All the pieces lie ready for assembly. Where do I start? Should I bother looking at the instructions? Nah!

2. The frame has been erected. Now it's merely a matter of bolting on the wooden shelves.

3. The final workstation - my kit is already looking more professional. ***AUI***

RATINGS

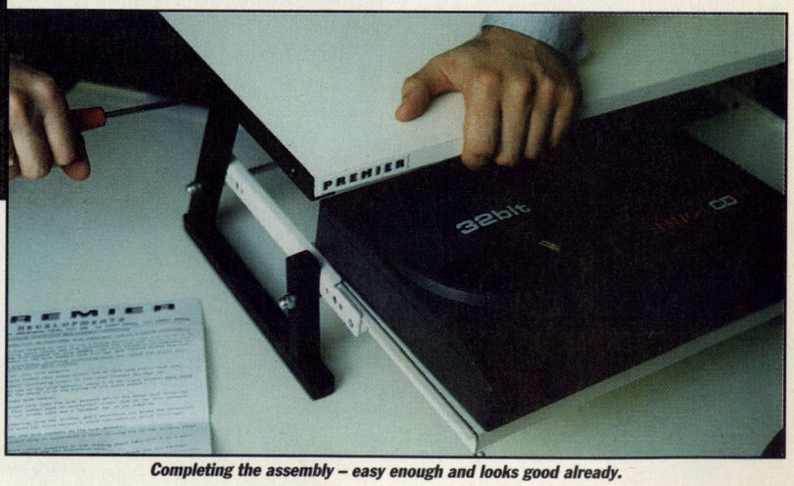
Premier Combi Unit

FEATURES	86%
DOCUMENTATION	68%
EASE OF USE	88%
VALUE FOR MONEY	80%

Overall Rating 85%

INFO

Price: £49.99
Premier Developments
4 Third Avenue, Warboys
Huntingdon, Cambs
PE17 2SR
Tel: 01487 823 684



Completing the assembly – easy enough and looks good already.

Like Greased Lightning

Cyberstorm 060, a Motorola 68060 based 50Mhz CPU card from Phase 5, runs like greased lightning. Gary Fenton buckles up and holds on tight to test drive it.

Since Autumn last year Phase 5 have been producing their 40Mhz based 040 Cyberstorm cards with the promise of an upgrade path to the 060 CPU. Motorola have only recently released the first batch of 060s in a reasonable quantity so Phase 5 can now supply Cyberstorms with this lightning fast CPU.

Installation

Cyberstorm is shipped in three parts: the carrier board, the memory module, and the CPU module. The carrier board replaces the Commodore A3640 CPU board inside Amiga 4000s. The installation manual said I just had to remove the rear drives in order to replace the CPU board. This was not the case as I ended up wrenching the front panel of the Amiga and pulling out the front drive bay complete with disk drive. Eventually I had enough room carefully to yank out the old CPU board out and plug the new one in.

The 060 is firmly mounted onto the CPU module complete with a heat sink and fan which sits on top of the 060 like a face hugger from the Aliens film. The module is supposed to rest on top of the carrier board supported by two plastic spacers. Most annoyingly none was provided with our review board even though the manual claims they are come with the kit. I couldn't bear the thought of waiting a few days to get hold of these spacers so I courageously removed one from the carrier board (there are four which hold it above the Amiga's motherboard), leaving it standing on three legs, and used it to support the CPU module - which now is supported by just one leg instead of the intended two. I'm sure McGuiver would have done something similar!

RAM Bam, Thank You, Mam!

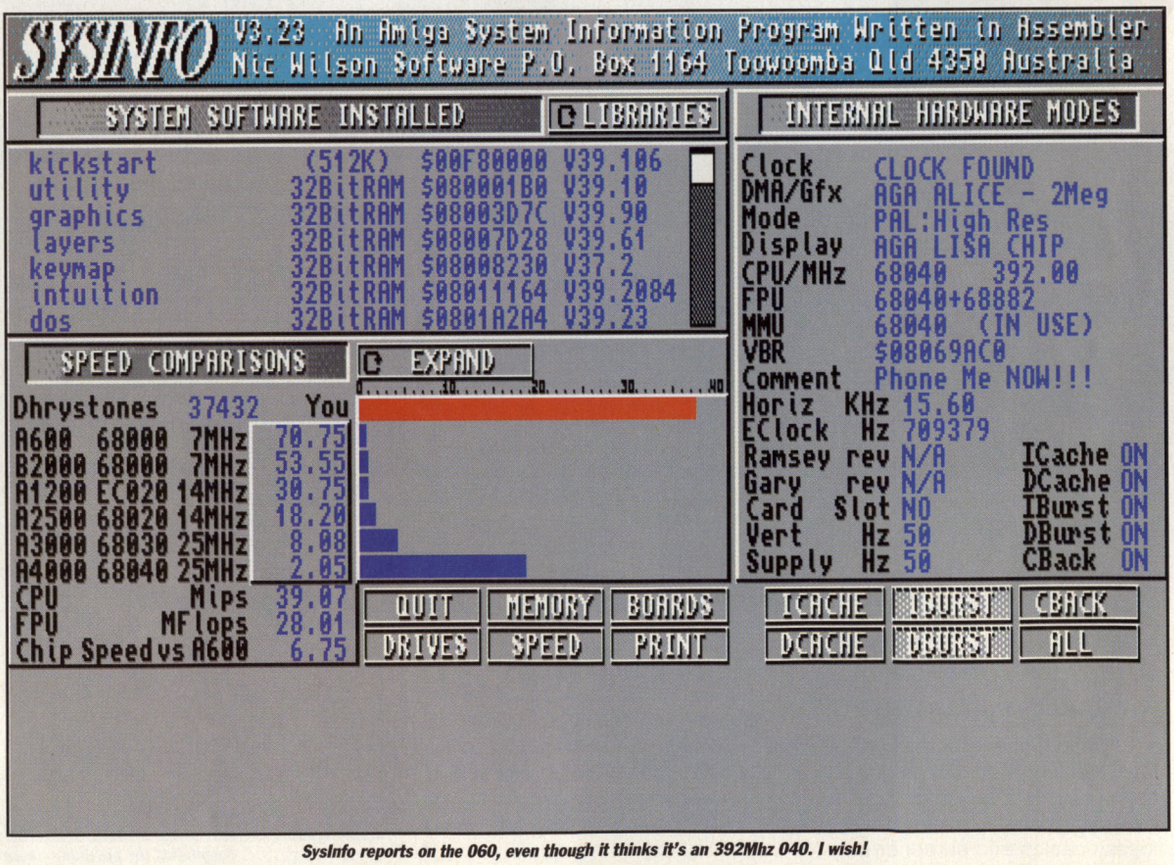
Next came the memory module. It has space for four SIMMs which can be a mixture of 4, 8, 16, and 32 Mb SIMMs. 70ns RAM should be used since the Cyberstorm was designed to run at this speed and using 60ns RAM won't make it go any faster. If you have 70ns 4Mb SIMMs on the Amiga's motherboard then it's a good idea to evacuate them from there and move them over to the Cyberstorm as this will double RAM transfer speeds.

Once loaded with RAM, the module can be slotted into the carrier board. The memory module sits back to back with the Amiga's daughter board rubbing shoulders. This can potentially short circuit thousands of pounds worth of equipment so Phase 5 provide a insulation card which is placed between the two boards like a partition. But I didn't get one with the review board so I had to improvise again.

With the installation complete the Amiga can be put back together and powered up. The first test I had planned was AIBB, the best benchmark program for the Amiga. You can imagine how alarmed I was to watch it crash the moment it loaded. I emailed the author of AIBB hoping for an explanation, or even news about a new version which works with the 060, but he hasn't replied. Maybe it was an old e-mail address I used?

Software

The supplied software for the Cyberstorm 060 should be installed before the Cyberstorm hardware. The optional CyberPatcher program claims to further speed up certain FPU



SysInfo reports on the 060, even though it thinks it's an 392Mhz 040. I wish!

LightWave "Texture Demo"		
4000/040	564 sec	
Cyber060	135 sec	4.2 Times Faster
Essence/Forge texture render		
4000/040	138 sec	
Cyber060	37 sec	3.7 Times Faster
Vlab Motion: Compose 25 frames		
4000/040	1096 sec	
Cyber060	382 sec	3 Times Faster

LightWave benefits the most from an 060, it's just over 4 times faster than a stock A4000/040.

calculations which have slowing the machine down with some programs, but Imagine was accelerated quite a bit. Other included software is intended for developers.

Tests

All the tests are compared with a regular A4000/040 running at 25Mhz. SysInfo ran and reported just over 39 MIPS and 28 MFLOPS. Have a close look at the screen shot of SysInfo and see what you think. MIPS, other than standing for Million Of Instructions Per Second, has a second less well know meaning - Meaningless Indication of Processor Speed. Real tests should be conducted with real applications and that's what I've done as you can see from the results printed here. Additionally, tests using DiskSpeed reported IDE and SCSI hard disk speed improvements of up to 5% on writes and 15 to 20% on reads.

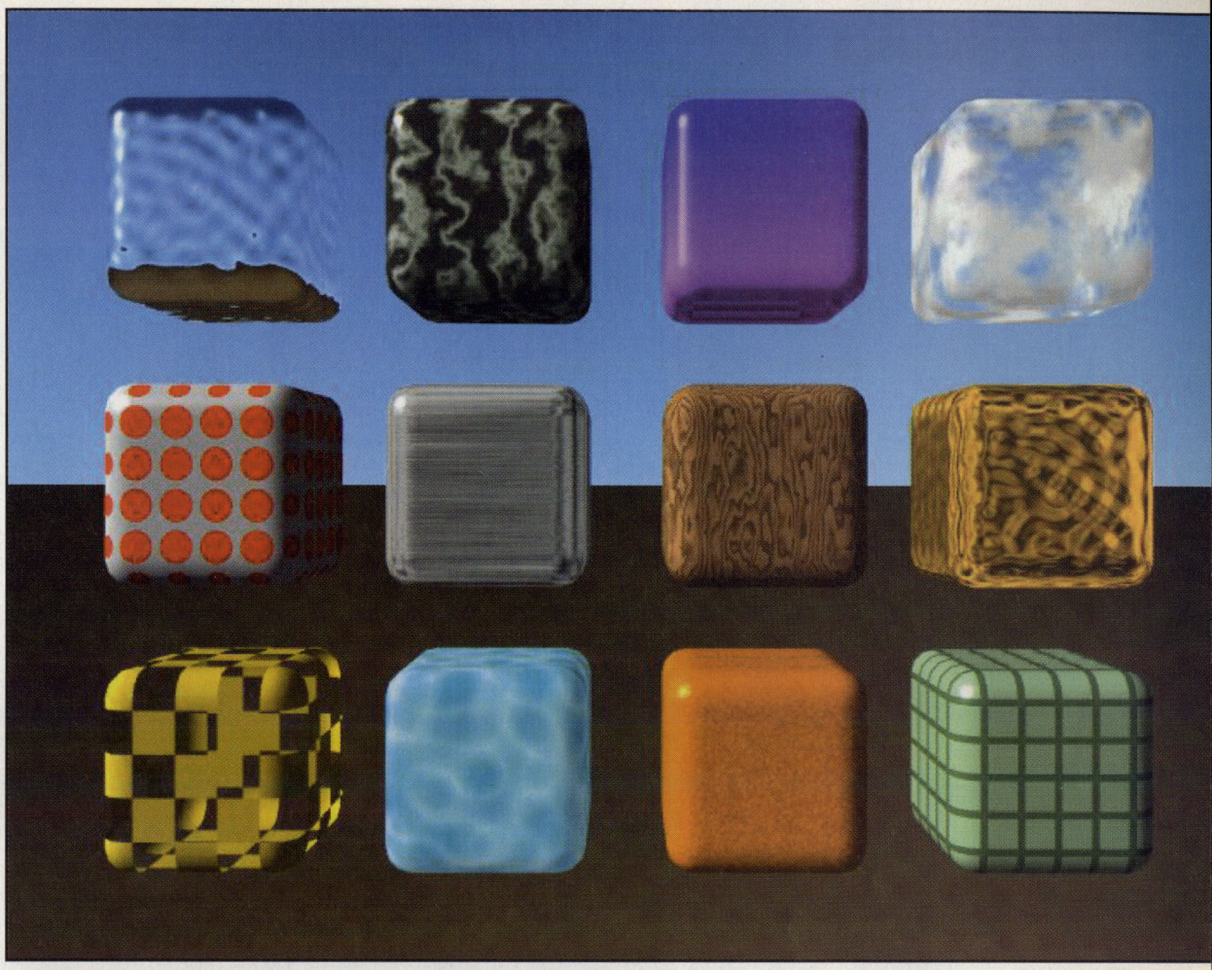
Almost every piece of software I have ran perfectly with the 060 showing no signs of incompatibly. However, there are a few problems. ADPro freezes the computer for several seconds before scaling up an image - reducing images and other operations don't produce this problem. Photogenics 1.2 sometimes hangs when Compose has been used.

The cause of this problem is currently unknown so I can't point my finger at either Cyberstorm or Photogenics. My initial experience with the 060 suggest its powerful FPU (which is built-in, just like the 040's) may be causing the problems. ShapeShifter, the astonishing new Mac emulation software,(See review in the next *AUI*) crashes unless the "FPU disable" option is selected.

Load 640x512 JPEG		
4000/040	9.5 sec	
Cyber060	2 sec	4.7 Times Faster
Render 256 colours, Floyd dithering		
4000/040	16 sec	
Cyber060	6.5 sec	2.5 Times Faster
Oilpaint Operator		
4000/040	53 sec	
Cyber060	21 sec	2.5 Times Faster

These are some tests done using Art Department Professional X.

VMM 3.0, the virtual memory program, always crashes with the 060. The fractal generator, Fractuality, was nearly always slower with the 060 if my tests are correct. One test suggested it was 4 times slower than with the 040 CPU! Again, this may be related to differences in the way the FPU works. Other fractal programs such as Mand2000 and Vista Pro ran perfectly, 3 to 4 times faster with the 060.



Lightwave demo, speeded up the MIPS.

Load 1500x1950 JPEG		
4000/040	56 sec	
Cyber060	18.5 sec	3 Times Faster
Save 1500x1950 JPEG at 75%		
4000/040	63	
Cyber060	17.5 sec	3.6 Times Faster
Halve 1500x1950 image (scale 50%)		
4000/040	84 sec	
Cyber060	35 sec	2.4 Times Faster
Fix Defocus (defocus set at 10)		
4000/040	134 sec	
Cyber060	42 sec	3.2 Times Faster

Photogenics 1.2 was on average over three times faster.

Conclusion

With the Cyberstorm 060 running between 2.5 and 4.5 times faster than a regular 4000/040, it certainly makes life sweeter and distinctly faster for anyone who needs raw processing power. There's an optional SCSI-2 module for connecting fast SCSI-2 hard disks internally and externally, which we didn't have for review. One version of the Cyberstorm SCSI-2 module has a built-in Ethernet and serial interface. If you're interested in these modules then check with Gordon Harwoods for the latest news on availability.

Reluctantly I have to give the board back and return to my original 040 CPU which will undoubtedly feel much slower now that I've tasted the power of an 060. The average performance worked out to be around four times that of a 4000/040 which is a substantial improvement. 3D animators will greatly benefit from this because time is money.

However, bear in mind that the 060 is only one third faster than the Cyberstorm and Warp 40mhz 040 accelerators. Both run up to three times faster than a stock A4000/040 and the Cyberstorm 040 is a good £250 cheaper than the 060 version. You should consider if one third more power on top of the 40mhz 040 is worth the extra money for the 060. With £250 spare you could buy the SCSI-2 controller and still have £50 left over to put towards buying more RAM. The really sad news is that the £995 060 is about as powerful as an £800 DX4 100mhz PC complete with hard disk and monitor. Both calculated the Sieve test in 11 seconds, but you can't run PC, Macintosh, and Amiga software simultaneously on a DX4 PC! More on that amazing story next month.

SysInfo MIPS Test (speeds in MIPS)		
4000/040	18.86	
Cyber060	39.08	2.1 Times Faster
SysInfo MFLOPS Test (speeds in MFLOPS)		
4000/040	4.78	
Cyber060	28.01	5.8 Times Faster
Sieve Test (calculates all prime numbers up to 16384, 1000 times)		
A3000/030 25mhz	151 sec	
1200/030 40mhz	84 sec	
4000/040 25mhz	39 sec	
Cyber060 50mhz	11 sec	3.5 Times Faster

Here are some performance tests which can vary greatly.

ESCOM are talking about developing PowerPC Amigas which will get the Amiga back on its feet competing on the same terms as PCs and Macs. But that's for the future. The reality now is the Cyberstorm 060 which is currently the fastest accelerator available for the Amiga, and if you need three to four times the power of a regular 4000/040 then this is the way to go. Excellent quality and excellent performance! *AUI*

RATINGS

Cyberstorm

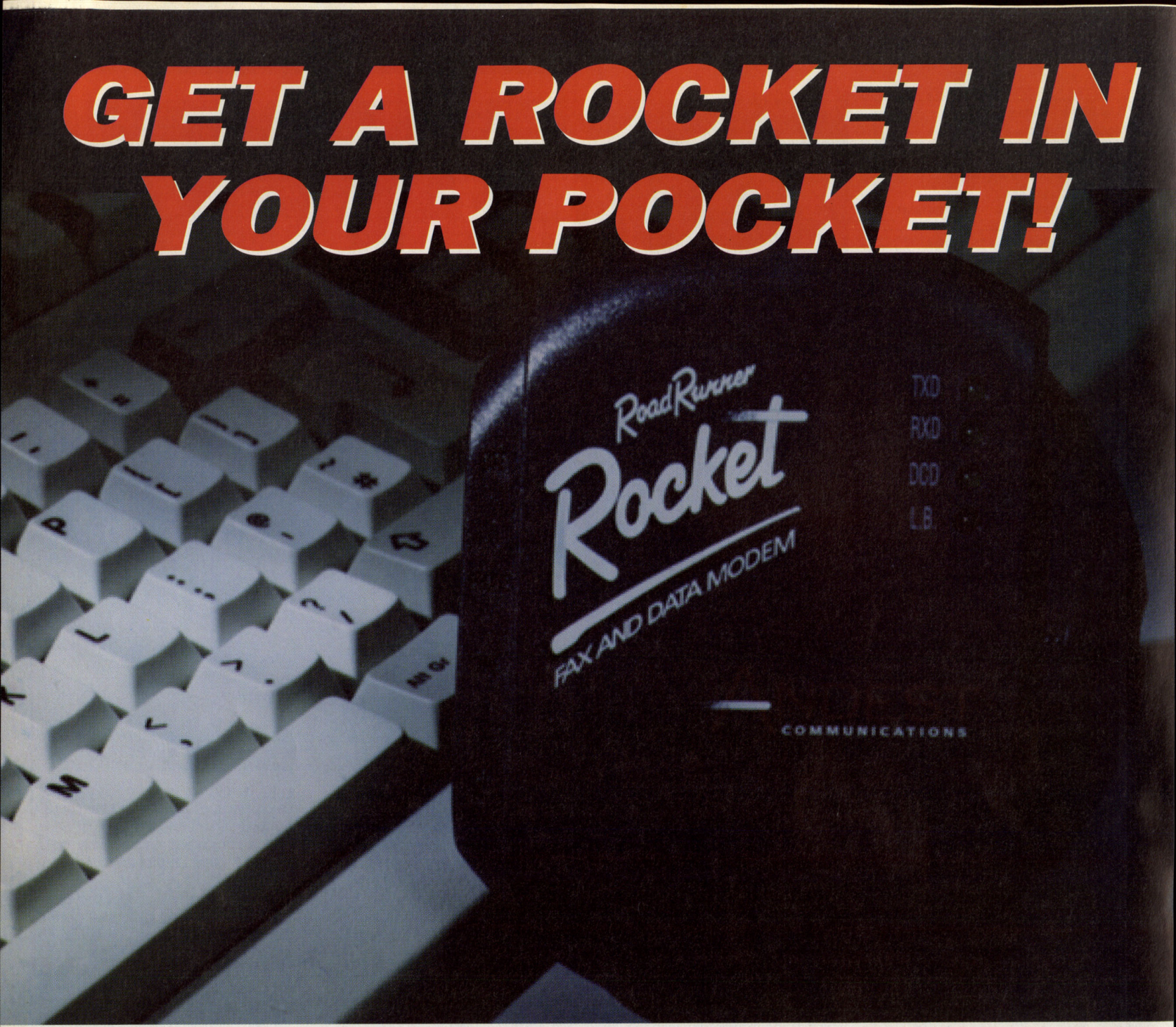
FEATURES	90%
PERFORMANCE	95%
DOCUMENTATION	80%
VALUE FOR MONEY	80%

Overall Rating 90%

INFO

Price: £995
Contact:
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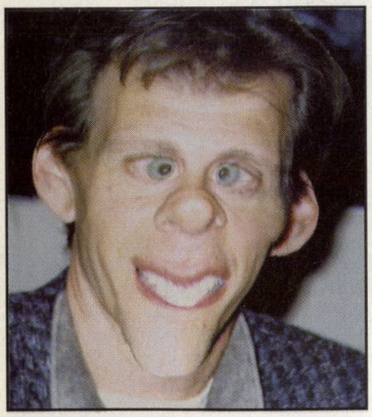
Warp and More



PHOTO

Almathera's exciting paint package, Photogenics, returns with its first major upgrade. Gary Fenton test drives the novel features.

As soon as Photogenics was released last December the programming team were hard at work in their laboratories conjuring up the next release. Most of the features that didn't make it into version 1 are in 1.2 with lots of new modules and a warp tool to name but a few extras.



The Warper is a lot of fun to use!

Warped Mind

The most significant new tool in Photogenics 1.2 is the Warper. This allows you to distort parts of an image by bending, stretching and twirling it. The area to be warped is defined by dragging a ellipse shape around the area. Next, you specify the offset for the centre of the warp by dragging a point in any direction you like. Warping isn't a fast operation, so you must be patient.

There are two options which can be set for the Warper tool. These are the warp factor (strength of the distortion) and the twirl angle. Twirling spins the image around a centre point producing a whirlpool effect which can generate stunning backgrounds. Using the Warper on eyes can turn a normal looking person into an alien creature. Like everything else in Photogenics it's fun experimenting with different settings and combinations of effects.

CyberGraphics

CyberGraphics is a powerful system which allows retargetable graphics (RTG) to be seamlessly integrated into the Amiga OS. It allows graphics cards, namely Picasso-II and CyberVision, to work extremely well with CyberGraphics aware or intuition friendly software, such as Photogenics. With either of these graphics cards Photogenics presents a true 15, 16, or 24 bit display instead of a HAM8 display. This allows you to draw directly onto a 24 bit screen and WYSIWYG - what you see is what you get!



I used the new colourise tool to add colours to this previously black and white picture. Aaaah, Michelle!

New GIOs

Photogenics' loader and savers modules are called GIOs and 1.2 has some new and improved GIOs. Most of the file format GIOs have been speeded up. The IFF GIOs have been changed so that a new IFF-24 GIO saves 24 bit IFF files and an updated ILBM GIO saves pictures in 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, or 256 colours. Optional Floyd Steinberg dithering can be turned on to give the impression of more colours than there actually are. The results are about the quality of Art Department Pro which costs three times as much as Photogenics.

Other new savers include a displayer for the Harlequin and Retina graphics cards, a PCX and TIFF saver, a PrefsPrinter saver to print out the graphics using your Workbench printer settings, and a StudioII saver for printing out using the high quality commercial Studio II printing software (which is available from Almathera.) A new HAM6 display saver is included for use by non AGA users.

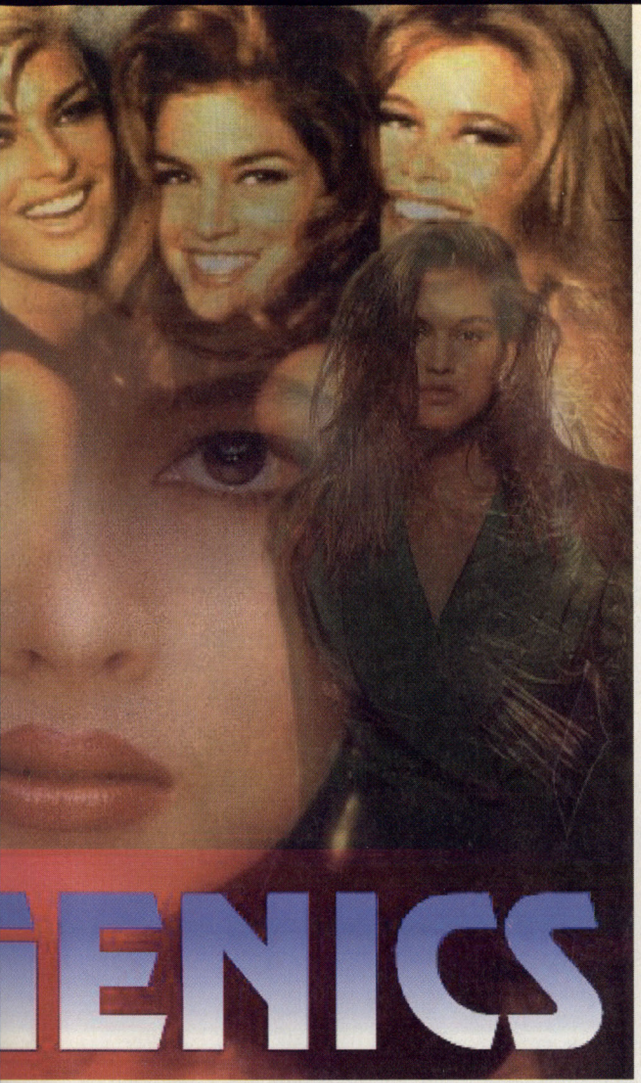
New loader GIOs include TIFF and PCX loaders, ProGrab24RT supporting the digitiser of the same name, and an improved Backdrop loader.



This image I created by warping a plasma and composing and displacing it on top of photograph has no use, other than to look pretty and demonstrate Photogenics!

There's a separate Toaster kit for users of NewTek's Video Toaster which is available at an extra cost. However, in the USA Photogenics will be shipping as version 1.25 which includes Toaster support.

There are additionally a few GIOs available in the public domain such as a Lottery loader (generates random lottery numbers!), ShowHiQHam (shows current image in superhires



Transparent gradients can be used in compose for subtle blending of images.

HAM8 mode for a high quality display), and one called Paper (available soon) which generates different kinds of canvas backgrounds for you to work on.

The Loader and Saver windows have two new features. A button called Prefs lets you set up any parameters for the selected GIO, and the Info button gives you information on what the GIO does and the version number.

PaintModes

PaintModes are the little modules that make Photogenics tick. Each one can process an image in a unique way. Some tint the image, another makes it brighter, and so on. Many PaintModes have been improved and a few new modes added to Photogenics splendid armoury of effects.

The AddNoise mode has some new options to add random noise to the image in different ways. One option makes the image randomly brighter, another one makes it randomly darker while yet another adds noise only to the blue channel.

By popular demand a new Gamma PaintMode has been written along with Colourise (for colouring pictures), RubEmboss, Mirage (creates a variable reflection), Refract (offsets the image on top of itself four times) BasRelief (emphasises contrasts in the image giving some strange effects), CrossHatch, Defocus (very powerful blur), Dither, Jitter, and Split.

All PaintModes can now be used in conjunction with Compose. It's a bit like picking up a brush in DPaint and turning on Smooth or Shade, except Photogenics has an abundant selection of different modes and DPaint hasn't.

Zooming

The magnify tool has undergone a major overhaul for the better. Now it's possible to select exactly how much you want to zoom in and out. A unique feature of Photogenics displays a box filling the window of the im-age. If you move the mouse to the right the box shrinks and if you move to the left the box enlarges. This box shows you the area onto which you are going to zoom when you release the mouse button. It's difficult to imagine because this method has never been used on any paint program before.

The classic DPaint style of magnifying is still there which gives you a democratic choice between which method to use. The ">" key zooms in and the "<" key zooms out. The "n" key has been added which centres the image around the mouse pointer. And panning around has been improved so using the cursor keys move the image in larger jumps. Before it scrolled the image pixel by pixel!

Extra Extra!

A useful Crop feature has made its way into Photogenics which lets you define an area of the image to want to keep and does away with the area you want to lose. The crop area is selected by dragging and stretching an outline of a box to cover the area you want to keep - very much like CropVisual in ADPro.



The new BasRelief paint mode makes Cindy look like I painted her by hand. If only she'd model for me.

Resize Tiled is another new feature which resizes the image to whatever size you want, but instead of scaling the image it tiles (clones) it to fill the new dimensions.

Photogenics has added support for NewIcons which is a separate PD program that generates picture icons using an image. When you save a picture with Photogenics (and NewIcons is installed) it also saves an icon which looks like a miniature version of the picture.



The new magnify mode lets you size a rectangle around the exact area you want to enlarge...

One of the most practical new features is transparent gradients. It has its own window containing different patterns of gradients to choose from. Used in conjunction with any solid drawing tool (such as rectangle or circle), you can create shapes which are graduated from transparent to solid. This also works when blending in composed images. Graduations can be selected from left to right, top to bottom, and from the outside inwards. These directions can be reversed too.

Presets

Almathera have added lots more preset page sizes for PAL, NTSC, and VGA resolutions. A new 16 colour preview mode now sits in the Settings menu along with 256 colour, HAM8, 16 greyscales, 256 greyscales, and CyberGraphics. The 16 and 256 colour modes now use on-the-fly dithering routines to maximise colour bandwidth and the 256 mode looks much better than it did before.

The F10 key has been assigned by default to launch the HAM8 display saver giving you a high quality rendition of the current image with a single key stroke. It's possible to choose another display saver instead, like the Retina, or CyberGraphics saver if you happen to use those graphics cards.

One other feature worth a mention is called "Auto-adjust Levels" which finds the minimum and maximum brightness levels and adjusts the image to maximise the contrast without losing detail. It expands the dynamic range of the image and is most effective with low contrast images.

Prior to 1.2, stretching an image window distorted the image as the aspect ratio of the window was changed. Now you can lock the aspect ratio of the image so stretching the window will cause the image to be resized while keeping the correct aspect ratio. This is a pleasant improvement at the request of happy Photogenics users.

Finally, the addition of a curve (arc) drawing tool appears on the ToolBox so at last curved lines can be drawn. The rest of the improvements to Photogenics are minor and include a few bug fixes.



...and zooms in. Using the left mouse button centres the image around the pointer while the magnify tool is on.

Conclusion

I love it! Even after 8 months the novelty factor hasn't worn off. I find a new use or trick in Photogenics every week and it is a pleasure to work with at a professional level. My only major gripe is the complete lack of animation support or batch file processing. It's like having a luxury cruise liner docked in port which never leaves. Photogenics is on the verge of being an outstanding animation engine - if only Almathera can concentrate on equipping it with the necessary features for animation - even Arexx support will be a milestone.

As paint, processing, and composition package, Photogenics should be on every artist's shopping list. The low price of the upgrade itself is quite generous on Almathera's part and I strongly recommend all registered users to be self-indulgent and upgrade immediately! ***AUI***

RATINGS

Photogenics 1.2

FEATURES	95%
PERFORMANCE	95%
EASE OF USE	96%
VALUE FOR MONEY	96%

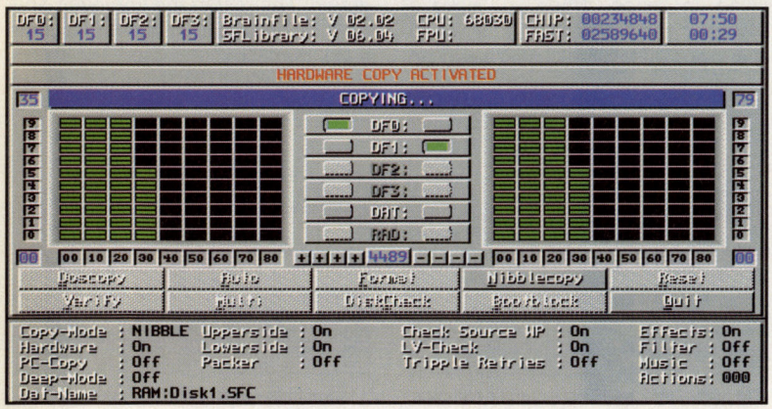
Overall Rating 96%

INFO

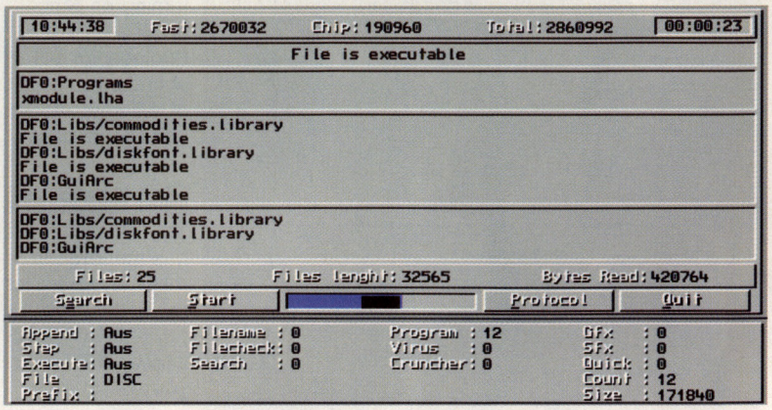
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Discology

Mark Blackham ignores that childhood taunt of "Copycat, copycat" and tests the newest disk copying hardware package.



Caption, required, if possible please supply with copy.



Caption, required, if possible please supply with copy.

Some Amiga magazines seem to have steered clear of Discology. They're afraid of upsetting some people in the industry who don't take kindly to software / hardware which allows you to copy protected programs.

Let's get this straight. It's perfectly legal to make back-up copies of programs, even copy-protected ones, that you own. Let's face it, these original disks can become corrupted, and a few years after the release I'd be surprised if you would easily get new copies off the software house (if they still existed). It is safer to use copies of the originals.

But deliberate copying of software to pass on to your mates, or to sell at super-cheap prices, is theft. You are depriving the commercial software industry of their deserved income.

Copying packages have legitimate uses. They can back up software you own, allow you to copy disks faster and to multiple destinations and devices and overcome disk problems. They usually allow you to perform other disk-related toolbox operations - like formatting and checking disk sectors.

The industry should breathe easier given that my testing showed this hardware based copying program still could not beat the protection of some games.

Software

Discology takes the standard approach of giving the user a choice of copying processes - from the usual "DOS" copy to deep copying and nibble copying.

The main screen is dominated by a left and right window divided into sectors. The middle panel between them holds buttons representing the various devices you can copy to and from. The user clicks on the devices they want to designate as source and destination then clicks on DOSCopy in the range of copying tools along the bottom.

If you don't have a second floppy drive, you can copy straight from DF0 to RAM then back to DF0 again - now with your blank disk inside.

The default process for copying of floppy disks is DOScopy. If a reading error occurs on the source (indicative of protection) the program goes automatically into nibble copy mode to copy the disk track by tiny bits.

As the source is copied the window sectors become coloured. Users must watch the destination window to see if and when the sector colours change. The manual doesn't tell you what to watch for, but a single different colour against the rest indicates a problem track which hasn't been copied correctly.

Hardware

Discology is also a hardware copying system. It uses a special piece of electronics which plugs in between your Amiga and the second floppy disk drive. The small double-ended plug sticks into the Amiga's disk drive port. The second drive is then plugged into the remaining end.

Siegfried have made a big mistake in not making the plug invisible in the chain until needed. The standard copying procedure will not work if the plug is installed. That means you must turn off your Amiga and connect the plug each time you think you need the extra copying power.

Siegfried reckon you will rarely need the hardware, and if you do it should only be used on the sectors throwing up problems.

Options

A distinctive feature of Siegfried software appears to be the impressive range of extra, unexpected options.

Discology performs link virus tests and bootblock checks automatically.

The DAT pseudo drive allows multiple copying and auxiliary devices, such as magneto-optical drives and external hard disk storage.

The RDT pseudo drive allows you to copy source disks via modem to another computer! Simply set up another Amiga with Discology and copy your software direct to their machine, as if were just another destination drive.

In addition, the nibble copy mode allows MS-DOS and Atari Double Density disks to be copied.

The usual frills are also available - like user-definable samples for the program's alert sounds, and music modules for playing while you complete the sometimes lengthy copying process.

Conclusion

I compared the performance of Discology with the standard WB3 copy procedure and X-Copy.

Not surprisingly, the WB copy was soon defeated by the merest suggestion of copy protection on a disk.

With a whole range of aging protected software, both X-Copy and Discology managed to copy with few problems.

Newer software posed a tougher challenge, which both failed to surmount. In many cases the all important bootblock was copied successfully and the software would get no further than the opening screens when run.

Copying is a tricky business. Disk drives move about, get old, copy differently each time, have different tolerances and levels of performance, and so on. The result is that it may take a number of attempts to beat copy protection with Discology, or it may work better on another Amiga than yours.

I'll probably stick with X-Copy, the software just feels better to me, but with all the extra options and added power of Discology, you can't get a better copying program. ***AUI***

RATINGS

Pizaz

FEATURES	92%
PERFORMANCE	91%
DOCUMENTATION	83%
EASE OF USE	75%

Overall Rating 86%

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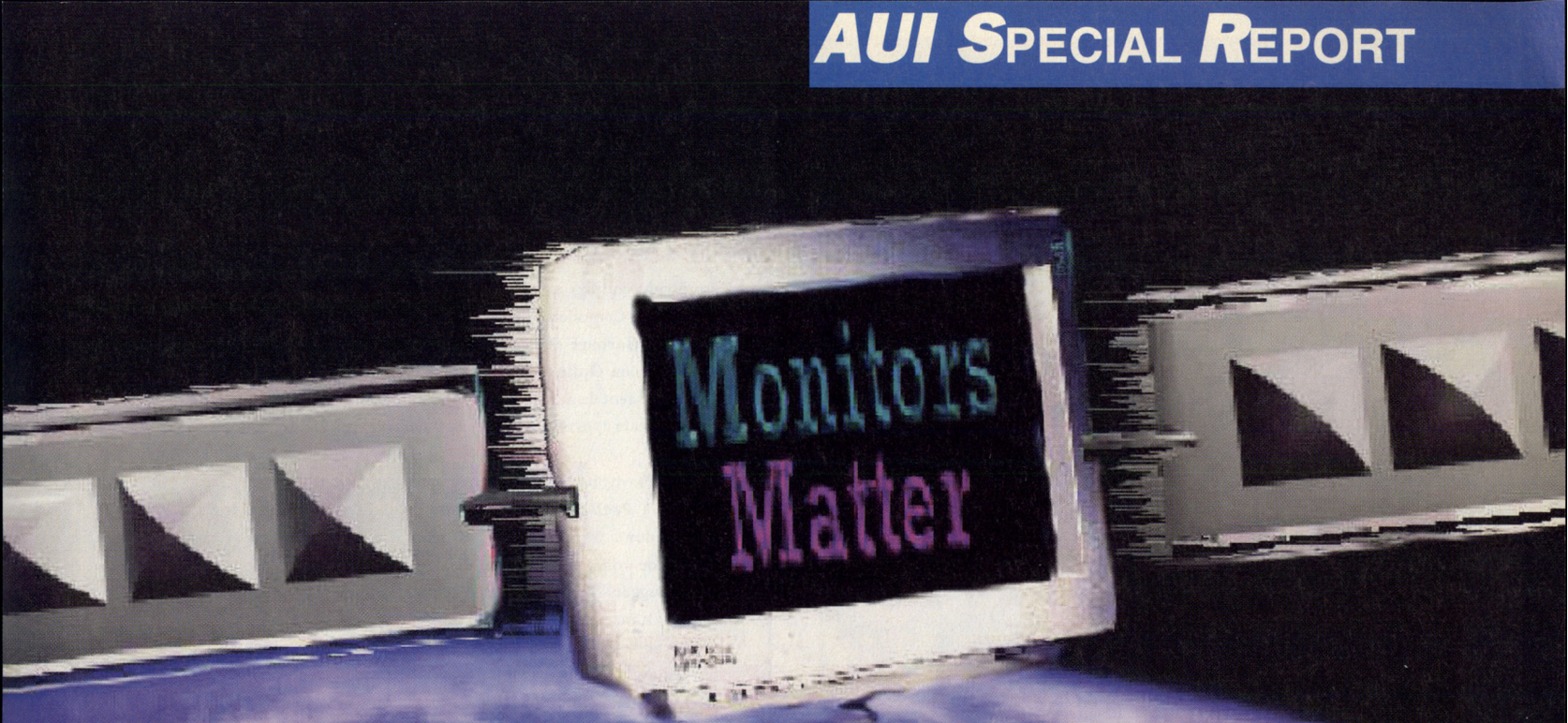
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The Eyes Have It

Monitors Matter, say John Taylor and Gideon Overhead as they lead the 20/20 visionary team that points the searchlight of an *AUI* Special Report onto screenland. And yes, you can see the difference, they report, as they focus in on a spectrum of monitors not usually thought to be usable with the Amiga for signs of brilliance and contrast the sometimes starry-eyed claims of the manufacturers with sharp reality.

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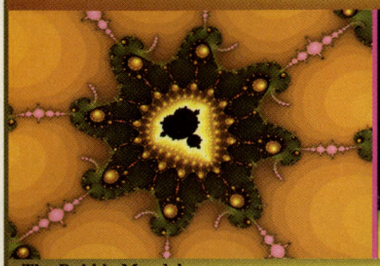
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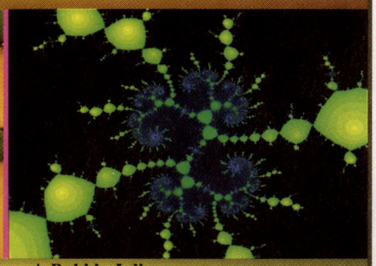
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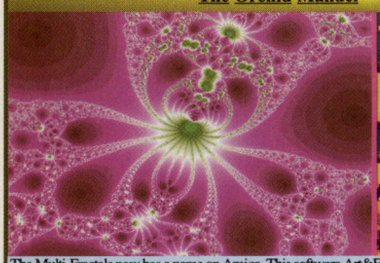
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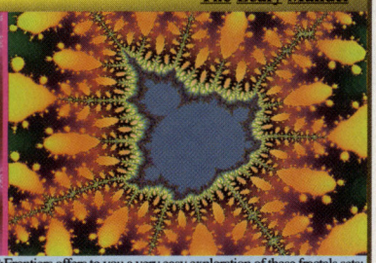
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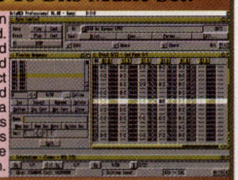


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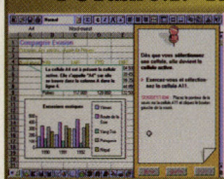


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A Vision of Luxury

Gideon Overhead is dazzled by the charms of Samsung's new 17GLsi monitor that sounds like a grande luxe car and gives a high performance picture.

A couple of years ago prices of 17 inch monitors were around the thousand pound mark. Since then prices have fallen considerably. Now you can pick one up for about £550.

Samsung have just released a new range of monitors, the GLi series which are a result of an investment of over £2.5 million in both technological and market reserch. They wanted a monitor that would be able to cope with the high resolutions which today's applications require. There are four models in the GLi series. Two 17 inch and two 15 inch. We had the pleasure of reviewing the current flagship, the 17GLsi.

Installation is simple, just plug in and go. It is even easier if you own a PC. Windows 95 will support Plug and Play which means that the monitor sends data down the VGA cable indentifying itself. Windows 95 picks up the information and with this can inform the PC of pre-set intructions such as timing and colour gain.

Image quality

The screen is very flat and the viewing area is larger than usual for a 17" monitor at 15.7". I don't really know why the total viewing area is not precisely 17" but it seems that that particular figure has nothing to do with the viewing area in any monitor. Samsung is not an exeption in this.

The GLsi can acheive a maximum resolution of 1600X1200 at a refresh rate of 66 Hz. Refresh rate is important as it indicates how many times a second the screen updates. The higher figure, the better but a number above 75Hz will completely eliminate flicker. The GLsi manages 100Hz at 1024X768 which is excellent and more than enough for most people's needs needs.

A word of warning though. The GLI series of monitors will not work in *all* Amiga screen modes. Please read the page on Amiga compatability in The Eyes Have It monitor feature in this *AUI* for details.

Looking at the GLsi for the first time, it is not immediately apparent where the adjustment controls are located. After a number of seconds prodding and feeling, I found two dials that changed the brightness and contrast. (No, as usual I didn't look first at the instructions.) It took a bit longer to find the main control panel. Pushing just below the screen revealed a board which slides down and holds 10 buttons.

On Screen Window

To adjust the display parameters you press the appropriate button on the panel and change the figure with a direction control in the centre. When changing any of the settings, an on screen window appears and you can see by how much you are altering the setting by the figures displayed. Every aspect of screen geometry can be adjusted, from pincushion and trapezoid distortion, to parallel and tilt. Even the colour temperature can be altered to suit your needs. Yes. colour is measured as a temperature. There must be a reason for it.

The GLsi has a recommended retail price of £699. The 17" GLi which is the model below this is £100 less, so what are the differences? The Glsi is designed for the user who needs a monitor for precision rendering and desk top publishing. It can therefore achieve higher refresh rates and resolutions. On the back of the monitor there are 5 BNC connectors which means that it is MAC compatible. Fine if you have Mab, but if you don't, you can go for the lower price model.

To reduce glare, most mointors have some sort of coating applied to the screen. This helps to relieve eye strain and makes the surface less reflective. The GLsi has a special Ultra Clear coating which gives you the same readability provided by a glass filter but without a matt finish.

The GLsi has a great power saving feature built in which unfortunately is not compatible with the Amiga at this time. It should function in conjuction with your computer's graphics card. This system works by the use of a special signal generated by the card which triggers the monitor to power down when not being used, so saving energy. There are several power saving modes, in a lessening series, but in reducing them it may take longer for the monitor to come back on line.

Conclusion

I love this monitor, and I want one. Perhaps not the GLsi as it includes features which I don't need. I can save myself £100 by getting the GLi. The GLsi will be ideal for anyone who needs a professional monitor for graphics and DTP work. It has a pin sharp picture with little geometric distortion. Criticisms? GLsi does sound like a rather flash car and not a monitor, but I think I can certainly live with that! ***AUI***

RATINGS

Samsung GLsi

PERFORMANCE	95%
VALUE FOR MONEY	96%
EASE OF USE	94%
DOCUMENTATION	96%

Overall Rating 96%

INFO

Price: Samsung GLsi £699 RRP
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The Eyes Have It

Last year, 1994, was not exactly a blinding year for the Amiga or its monitors. With Commodore in liquidation, the market soon became devoid of Commodore's own screens, and finished with suppliers of Commodore compatible monitors apparently beginning to lose interest in the Amiga market.

Amiga owners were forced to the humiliating consideration of buying ordinary television sets. Yuk! The output of these frail monsters was somewhat improvable with the use of SCART connectors, but this remains an unsatisfactory solution. The clarity and sharpness is almost never as good as a dedicated monitor, particularly on specialist screen modes.

The very pop-ular Microvitec monitor, good quality and low price, helped satisfy the demand for Amiga screens and still sturdily continues to support the machine. However, there are other reasonable options too that are worth considering by Amiga users.

If we had a penny for every time *AUI* has been asked whether the Amiga can use a PC monitor, we'd have... well, an awful lot of pennies. PC monitors are abundant, some are surprisingly cheap, and they have the bonus factor of working with PCs, if you want to try and get one. *AUI* is here to help you understand what PC monitors are all about, and after reading this Special Report you may well want to consider a PC monitor instead of those which are designed expressly for the Amiga.

Alternative Monitors

Finding a decent PC monitor that works properly with the Amiga is not altogether easy. You can't just "plug and play" a PC monitor with an Amiga. There are complications. The first thing you will need is a 25-9 pin adaptor. The monitor port on the Amiga is a different size to those used by PC monitors to connect to a MSDOS/Windows screen. Any general computer store worth it's salt will have a bunch of probably unbranded adaptors for connecting different pinned sockets.

It's often considered that a PC VGA monitor is just not an option for the Amiga - that such monitor will refuse to work on the Amiga. This is not quite correct. It is all a question of scanning frequencies. Most monitors have a horizontal scanning frequency of between 30Khz and 80Khz. OS 1.3 - 2.1 Original Chip Set (OCS) Amigas only output at about 15Khz, Why this low? The Amiga was designed, among other things to be used for video and this is the frequency of composite video. This frequency is fine if you are using low-res screens, but if you want a flicker free display with a hires lace screen, you have to buy a dedicated Commodore monitor (if you can get one these days). These monitors can handle the low frequencies. It is also possible to buy a flicker fixer to add to your machine. Both options are relatively expensive when compared to a PC monitor of equivalent specification. The problem was almost solved by the release of the A3000, which has a built-in scan doubler. This doubles the output to 30Khz which is just with which the average PC VGA monitor is able to sync. All screen modes can be viewed. The A3000 was scrapped because of the release of a new machine, a new chip set, and an upgraded OS.

It's often considered that a PC VGA monitor is just not an option for the Amiga, that such monitor will refuse to work on the Amiga. This is not quite correct.

The 4000 took its place and OS 3 introduced new resolutions, such as Double PAL, to ease the scanning problem. Double PAL worked by doubling the scanning output to 30Khz much as the A3000 did. But the A3000 doubled every resolution as the flicker fixer intercepted everything that came out of the computer. The A4000 could only do this with Double PAL and this caused problems with software, especially games, which didn't use these special resolutions. There is no escaping this problem, and there is no easy solution. Either you swap to a video monitor when you are playing games and non OS3 friendly software, or you buy an expensive flicker fixer.

If you own a big box Amiga (3000, 4000) you can buy a graphics card such as the Picasso which has Retar-getable Graphics. This allows you to use the card's resolutions and many of colours on the Workbench and in most applications. As many of these cards use PC graphics chips, they will work in most resolutions on a standard S/VGA monitor.

Strong and Weak

There is an old saying in the Hi-fi industry that a music system is only as good as its weakest part. It's strange but this view may not be appreciated by some Amiga users who still use a TV instead of a monitor. Ask most users which computer system they have and invariably the answer will come back something like this "I've got an Amiga 3000 100MB hard drive and 8MB of memory." What's missing from this statement is any mention of their monitor! This example illustrates the importance - or lack of importance - users place on their monitor. To put the monitor in context here is another analogy, When you go to buy a bed you will be told to purchase the most expensive and best quality sleeping unit you can afford. This is because you are going to spend eight hours a night in it for many years. And if you are lucky give it plenty of hard work too! When you think about it the same is true of the monitor. Though no matter how good it is, you may not enjoy the activity quite so much as that the bed provides!

Get the best you can afford - your eyes will thank you for it!

If you are using it with professional programs such as word processing or DTP, you are going to spend many hours a day staring at this monitor. And give it plenty of hard work. For many reasons, some of which you will read in this Special Report, you should not treat the tool which gives you the communication from your computer with any less respect than the computer itself.

Healthy Respect

Obviously your eyes are of prime concern, but there are health issues for the rest of your body too. The first is radiation emission. Most people who sit in front of a TV or monitor know that these emit radiation. As you cannot see it, how are you to discover if your monitor or TV is emitting radiation that could produce long term problems? Contrary to common belief most radiation comes from the rear of the monitor not the front so it's the poor person who sits behind you that gets it in the neck or some other part of the anatomy. You can do a little experiment to prove this if you have a portable radio. As you move the radio around the monitor you will hear interference. This interference will increase at the rear of the monitor as it will respond to the quantity of radio frequency radiation.

Flicker

Another health issue is flicker. This is the almost imperceptible flashing of the screen caused by the picture not being refreshed fast enough. Most people are

aware that the prolonged use of strobe lighting can bring on headaches and, even worse, fits. At a recent West End show, there was even a notice warning the audience that strobe lighting was used and that it could be dangerous.

If you are close to a TV or a bad monitor then it is as if you were sitting in front of a strobe light for hours on end. No wonder many computer users suffer from headaches and eyestrain. However, fortunately, most quality monitors produced today are MPR II compliant. MPR II is a standard stating minimum levels of acceptable flicker, glare, radiation emissions and other health-affecting factors. It is based on a set of standards originally imposed by Sweden and then made European law.

This set of standards safeguards you from potentially harmful radiation but though it is European law, the law is not enforced at present in this country, which is disgracefully remiss of a government that purports to encourage the use of technology as a way of making the country more efficient and competitive.

So, many monitors on sale today do not comply with the law and TV's are not covered at all. When it comes to your health it's worth considering a monitor that is MPR II compliant. It may cost a bit more but it will be worth it.

Major Players in the Screen Game

While more and more computers, especially PCs, are supplied with monitors as a part of their initial combination of kit and the monitors frequently bear the brand of the computer, a very great proportion of the world's monitors are manufactured by a relatively small number of companies. They supply the monitors to OEMs - Original Equipment Manufacturers. That means that like baked beans in Tesco or Sainsbury, you could be buying the same well-known name product as an "own brand". Samsung, the Korean giant with a turnover of some £50 billion - yes, that's billion - is the largest manufacturer of such screens in the world. Goldstar, whom you might remember also a few years ago sold PCs and made the odd decision to get out of that field just as the market was taking off, is another not-so-sleepy Korean giant. Goldstar's turnover tops £30 billion and they too are a power in the monitor world.

The only really big European manufacturer is Philips and they seem to be losing ground against the increasing strength of the companies on the Pacific Rim.

Japanese brands like Hitachi and Sony, with their famed Trinitron technology are also big players in this growing screen game. The only really big European manufacturer is Philips and they seem to be losing ground against the increasing strength of the companies on the Pacific Rim.

As the demand for computers and consequently monitors grows - and last year for the first time in the USA market for example, the number of computers bought almost equalled the sale of TVs and this year is expected to exceed it, the companies



A dazzling new series of monitors for Samsung.

The Eyes Have It

CONTINUED

dominating the latest screen technology and able to bring it to market economically are going to be ever more successful and influential players in one of the fastest growing technological markets. With turnover mounting into the billions they can really be considered stars of the screen...

Samsung

A candidate for replacement of your old monitor or TV is Samsung's brand new SyncMaster GLi Series. Samsung say they set out to create a monitor that would satisfy the demands of today's applications for high quality images and be user-friendly.

Charles Bows, product marketing manager at Samsung Electronics, Computers and Peripherals Division told ***AUI***. "The new range reinforces Samsung's position as the world's largest manufacturer of monitors and strengthens our reputation as an innovator in research and design. Because of our research particular emphasis has been placed on the design of the SyncMaster GLi Series in terms of visual appeal and user features such as increased picture clarity, Ultra Clear screen coating, one touch front panel controls and on-screen displays that are simple to operate, and easy to follow".

The SyncMaster GLi Series is a result of an investment of over £2.5 million in both technological and market research to determine what the user needed. Samsung then built a monitor to match. The SyncMaster GLi Series includes two 17 inch monitors and two 15 inch monitors with 20 inch versions to follow on later this year.

The high resolution colour monitors use flat square CRT technology to offer an increased viewing area without loss of picture quality. The viewable area of the 17 inch models is 15.7 inch and on the 15 inch models is 13.8 inch which is, Samsung told ***AUI***, an improvement on the size visible on normal screens.

The range offers a choice of resolution and colour control including Samsung's RealColor Control System for ensuring colour fidelity across peripherals and Pantone colour reproduction which so that when you see a colour on the screen that's the colour your Amiga will print out - if your printer is good enough, of course.

A crisp, clear and uniformly focused image is achieved using Dynamic Focus, Shadow Mask and degaussing. The new RealColor Control System corrects colour mismatching between monitor and printers. You can precisely adjust the colour using only two variables, hue and colour (saturation).

The SyncMaster GLi Series has been built to look attractive, and also maximise user efficiency. Samsung have achieved their goals here as it does look exceptionally smart sitting on top of our Amiga 3000, even the colouring of the casings match.

The control panel slides out at the front of the monitor allowing your wrists to be at their most natural angle when using the controls. A special Ultra Clear coating is used on the GLi Series as a low cost alternative to achieve the same fine readability provided by a glass filter.

The refresh rate is at least 76 Hz, eliminating that unpleasant flicker. An anti-dust treatment on the screen reduces static electricity and prevents dust from accumulating.

Samsung also meets and beats the MPR II regulations and claim that harmful electromagnetic emissions have been virtually eliminated.

INFO

Samsungs New Series

SyncMaster 17 GLsi, 17 inch high resolution colour monitor with 0.26 mm dot pitch, maximum resolution of 1024 x 768 at 100 Hz refresh rate and 1600 x 1200 at 66 Hz refresh rate.
Price: £699.00

SyncMaster 17 GLi, 17 inch high resolution colour monitor with 0.28 mm dot pitch, maximum resolution of 1024 x 768 at 76 Hz refresh rate and 1280 x 1024 at 60 Hz refresh rate.
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The SyncMaster 15 GLi 15 inch high resolution colour monitor with 0.28 mm dot pitch and maximum resolution of 1024 x 768 at 76 Hz refresh rate and 1280 x 1024 at 60 Hz refresh rate. **Price: £345.00.**

The SyncMaster 15 GLe, 15 Inch RGB analogue colour monitor with 0.28 mm dot pitch, maximum resolution of 832 x 624 at 75 Hz refresh rate and 1024 x 768 at 60 Hz refresh rate.
Price £299.00.

Contact: Samsung Electronics, Computers and Peripherals Division, Samsung House, 225 Hook Rise South, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7LD.
Tel: 0181 391 0168 Fax: 0181 974 2782



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The Eyes Have It

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Goldstar

One company that makes all its monitors MPR II-compliant is GoldStar. One of the most popular is the GoldStar 1505DM, an ultra-high resolution colour monitor with a flat square tube with a dark glass/non-glare screen. The front panel buttons control power, contrast, brightness and screen position. This monitor could be regarded as the 'Lite' version of GoldStar's popular 1520DM. It is a well-designed quality monitor at the price of a 14 inch but with all the added advantages of the 15 inch screen.

INFO

Price: £249.00
Contact: LG Electronics UK Ltd
GoldStar House, 264 Bath Road,
Slough, Berks, SL1 4DT
Tel: 01753 500400
Fax: 01753 693061

Taxan

Two monitors in the Taxan range are of particular interest to Amiga users. The first is the Ergovision 400 LR is a 14 inch, triple scan colour monitor compatible with Amigas also with the IBM MCGA, VGA, 8514/, XGA, VESA, Super VGA (800x 600 @ 56 and 60 Hz) and 1024 x 768 interlaced graphics standards. Ergovision 400 LR has full-scan image control. This feature enables the picture to be adjusted to the edges which is claimed to provide a 19% greater active display area than most 14 inch colour monitors.

By using a non-glare dark tint and a 0.28mm dot pitch cathode ray tube the Ergovision 400 LR produces sharp text and colour graphics and is a useful replacement for the Amiga. The second monitor of interest is the Ergovision 410 LR

Ergovision 410 LR is a 14 inch high resolution colour monitor also compatible with Amigas. Ergovision 410 LR ensures flicker free images at both 640 x 480 and 800 x 600 resolutions. The Ergovision 410 LR also features full-scan image control.

INFO

Ergovision 400 LR, £185.00
Ergovision 410 LR, £265.00
Contact: Taxan (Europe) Ltd,
Taxan House, Cookham Road,
Bracknel,
Berkshire, RG12 1RB
Tel: 01344 484646
Fax: 01334 50974

Goldstars P505 hi-res 15inch. Bringing vibrant coloured life to the screen.

Hitachi

The Hitachi 15MVX 15 inch, digital-controlled, colour display monitor with microprocessor control, low radiation and an energy-reducing power-save function is a good candidate to be considered as a companion for the Amiga. The monitor is designed for applications such as word processing, spreadsheets and database processing and can also be used as an entry level monitor for CAD and desktop publishing.

The 15MVX Plus's microprocessor can store up to twenty display configurations, eight of which are preset by the factory. For each frequency and timing, you can adjust horizontal size and position, vertical size and position, pincushion correction and trapezoid to achieve the exact image you want.

The 15MVX Plus is a multi-scanning monitor and has a horizontal frequency range of 30kHz to 64kHz and a refresh rate of 50Hz to 100Hz. The 15MVX Plus complies with MPRII and the 15 inch tube is treated with an anti-glare silica coating, which refracts the light, improves picture quality and, say Hitachi, minimises any risks to health.

INFO

Price: £499.00
Contact: Hitachi Sales UK Ltd,
Hitachi House, Station Road,
Hayes,
Middlesex, UB3 4DR
Tel: 0181 849 2092
Fax: 0181 569 2763



The Hitachi 15MVX 15 inch monitor. Moving up to the new popular size.



The Sony MultiScan 15 inch monitor, spreading Trinitron technology.

Sony

Sony's Multiscan 15 inch monitor offers a worthwhile price performance ratio. The monitor combines single-scan image quality with CPU-based Digital Multiscan technology. The design of the Trinitron display has also been refined resulting in a monitor that is more compact and shorter in depth than previous versions, yet has a larger usable viewing area.

The Multiscan 15 inch offers refresh rates of 80Hz at a resolution of 1024 x 768 (non-interlaced) and 100Hz at 800 x 600 (non-interlaced) this gives a flicker-free screen. A microprocessor is used to provide consistent performance across a continuous range of video timings. The chips determine the graphic controller's video frequency, calculate the waveforms required to compensate for geometric distortion, and then generate the screen image. This process is said to eliminate nearly all distortion.

The monitor uses the ultra-fine 0.25mm pitch aperture grille with thin vertical openings that are claimed to allow more electrons to reach the screen's colour phosphors. The resulting images are brighter with more vibrant colours than those produced by conventional shadow mask systems.

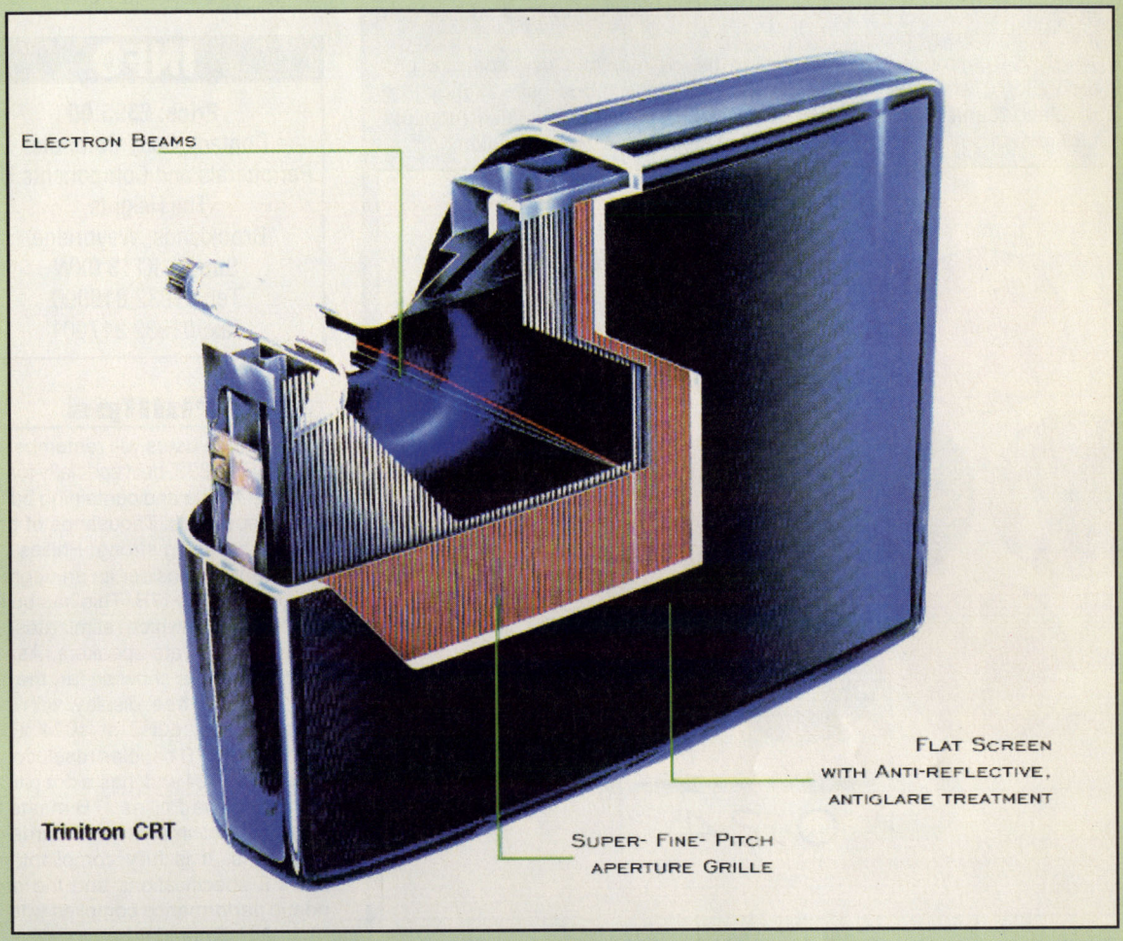
Sony say that with the use of a "Dynamic Quadrapole Lens (DQL) electron gun", the spot created on the phosphor is perfectly shaped over the whole screen area. The DQL system ensures fewer distorted spot shapes especially in the screen corners.

Colour temperature can be adjusted using digital controls. The monitor offers two preset colour temperature settings: 5000 and 9300 degrees Kelvin. These are the two colour temperatures most often used to simulate various environmental and lighting conditions. Besides the preset colour settings, it allows free adjustment of the colour.

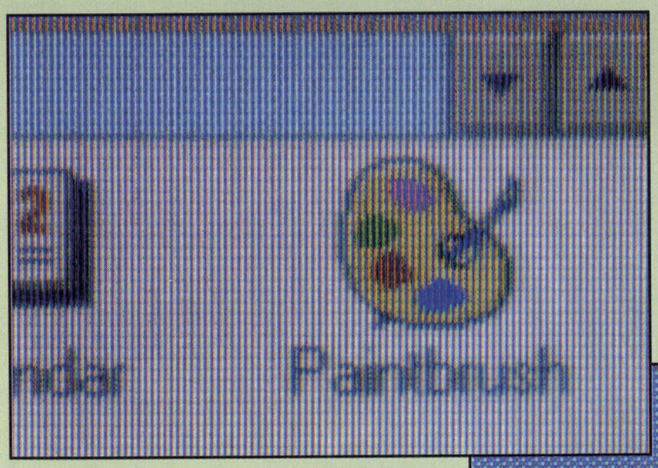
The monitor's push-button controls are on the front panel just below the

Trinitron Technology

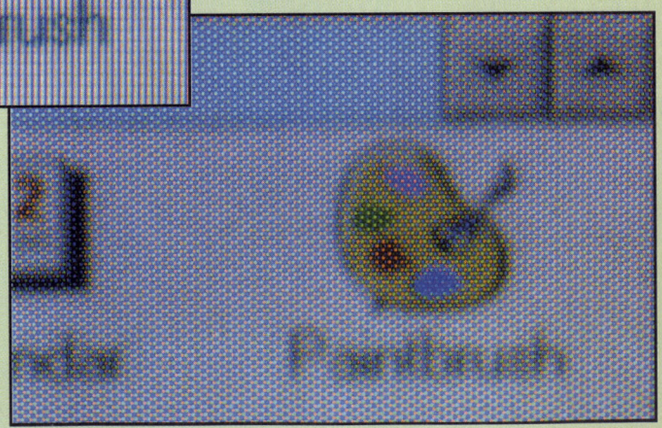
Sony's Trinitron has unusually become a technological name that is even recognised by the general public. It uses aperture grille-slots between a vertical array of wires. This gives Trinitron has a potential brightness advantage over shadow-mask tubes. This is because the slots allow more electrons to pass through to the screen than do the tiny holes of a shadow mask.



Above: Cut away diagram of Sony Trinitron Display showing how the red green and blue light beams are guided to the screen.



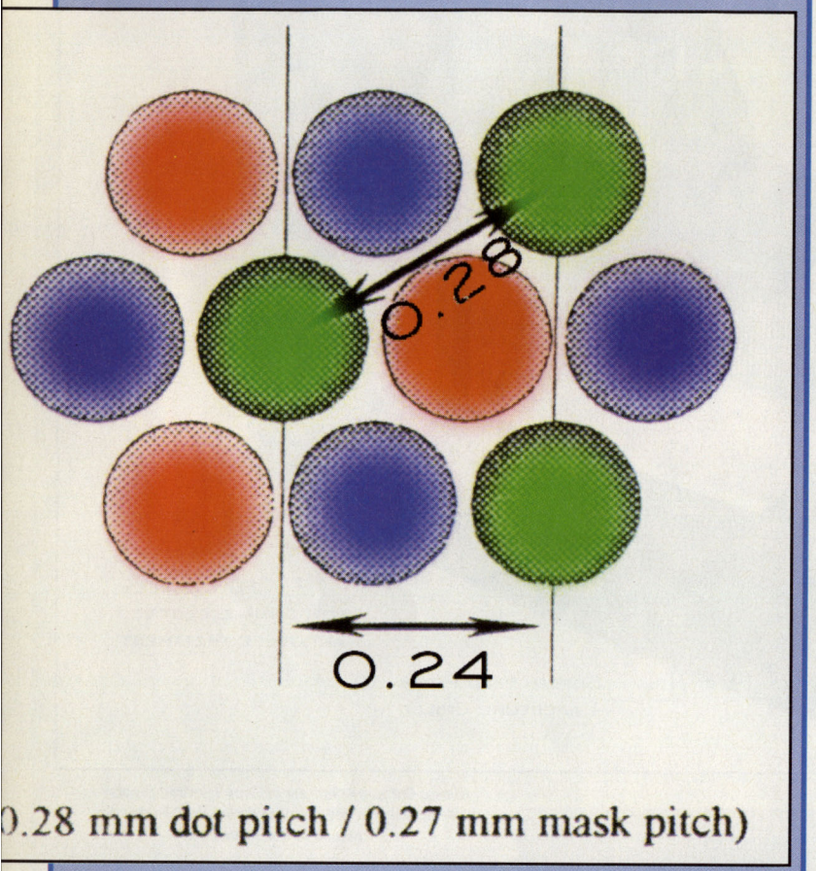
Shadow Mask illustration illustrating the difference between aperture grille and shadow mask technology.



Resolution Advantage

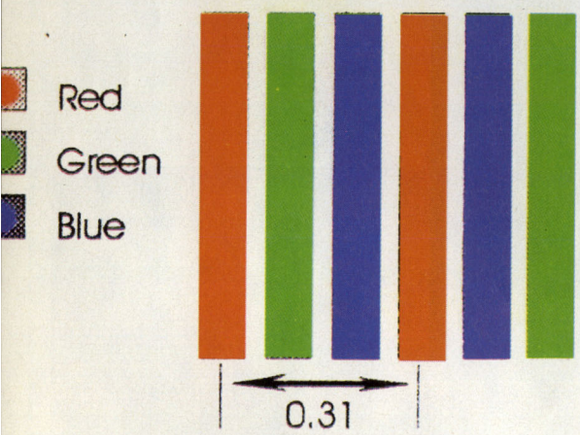
There is a certain amount of 'specmanship' relating to monitors right now particularly in relation to the resolution which a monitor can display. In particular some suppliers of aperture grill based monitors are claiming to be able to display 1600 x 1200 resolution images when the monitor has insufficient dots or pixels.

Both Trinitron and Diamondtron based monitors use aperture grill technology, whereas shadow mask technology tubes have higher true resolution capabilities than aperture grill based displays. The latest monitors use resolution enhancement technology to achieve this resolution.



0.28 mm dot pitch / 0.27 mm mask pitch)

Please note available picture widths may vary for different brands.



(0.31 mm dot pitch / 0.30 mm mask pitch)

screen. These controls enable the user to adjust the image brightness and contrast, horizontal and vertical size and centring. The digital system also allows for raster rotation, an adjustment that compensates for the effects of terrestrial magnetism.

INFO

Price: £395.00
Contact: Sony Computer Peripherals and Components UK,
The Heights,
Brooklands, Weybridge,
Surrey, KT13 0XW
Tel: 01932 816000
Fax: 01932 817001

Philips

Many Amiga users will remember the Philips CM8833, built specially for use with the Amiga and containing built-in stereo speakers. Thousands of them will still be going strong. Philips fans may want to consider as an upgrade, the new Philips 17B. This has built-in stereo-audio, which eliminates the need for separate speakers. As with all the monitors show so far, the 17B has a flicker free display with high refresh rates, 80HZ at 1024 x 768 mode. The 17B handles resolution up to 1280 x 1024 and has a dot pitch of O.28mm. The Philips 17B meets the latest environmental standards for emissions. It is fully compliant with MPR II specifications and the ergonomic performance complies with the ISO 9241-3 standard.

Philips make a big play of their UK 12 month warranty, covering collect-to-base on all its monitors, with optional upgrades to extend the existing warranty. Philips will also supply a loan monitor of equivalent standard for the duration of the repair which is a very useful idea.

The 17B is equipped with autoscan which ensures compatibility with the Amiga because it will sync to the screen mode you're using.

INFO

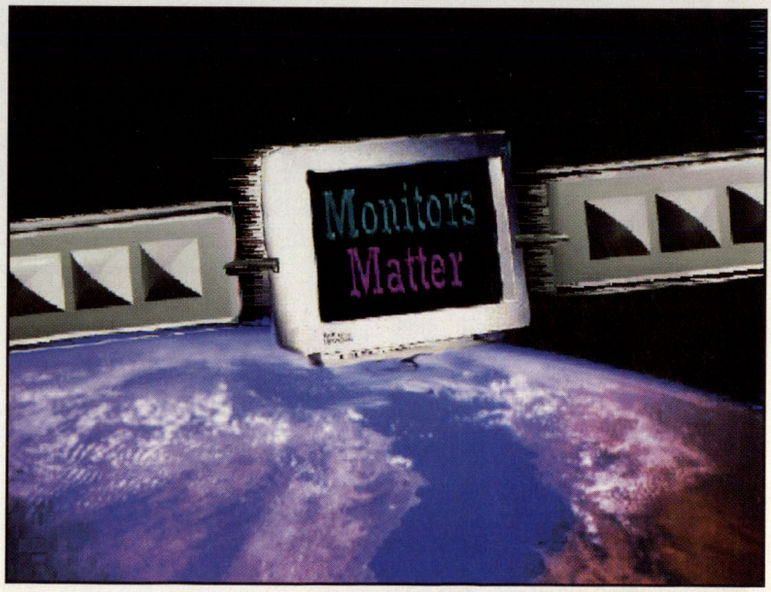
Price: £849.00
Contact: The Philips Centre
420-430 London Road,
Croydon CR9 3QR
Tel: 0181 689 4444
Fax 0181 781 8970

Jeepers! Your Peepers!

It's the health issues that are important when considering monitors. Get full information and trust your judgment and make sure you try and see the monitor in action before you buy. The monitor is personally for you the most important interface you have with the computer. It provides us with information that we need to be able to interact with the technology. For the games player there may be little point in investing in a high quality monitor but for the serious Amiga user it could be the most important purchase you make. For if you don't make the right decision you could well seriously suffer from using an inappropriate monitor in a way that no other aspect of your computing would affect you.

Yes, the speed and power of your Amiga is great. The output from your printer has to look sharp and even colourful. But the eyes have it, your sight is vital to your life. To paraphrase the old song, jeepers creepers, take care of your peepers.

We would recommend that you think seriously about what you are using to see what your Amiga shows you and make sure that your computing is doing you more good than harm. As the campaign says, Monitors Matter. And that's true for you too. ***AUI***



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G038 Smurfhunt Up shoot up
G043 A1300 Tetris
G043 Giddy Enough said
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CONTINUED

Easy Access

Aperture Grilles

Aperture grilles can be slots or wires-instead of a mask. The phosphors are painted on the inner face of the tube as interleaved stripes of the three additive primary colors. The grille blocks the electron beam.

Beam Control

The Shadow Mask on a Flat Square display uses a large metal plate perforated with tiny circular holes. Trinitron users a fine pitch aperture grill instead. This allows a Trinitron screen to display a uniformly bright image across the screen. This is because the aperture grille wires of a Trinitron block the beam only in one dimension and so don't impinge as much on the electron beam at the screen edges.

Cathode Ray Tubes

The oldest electronic image-generating system still in use is the cathode ray tube. The name is purely descriptive. The device is based on a special form of vacuum tube, a glass bottle that's been partially evacuated and filled with an inert gas at very low pressure. The cathode-another name for a negative electrode-of the tube shoots a beam or ray of electrons toward a positively charged electrode, the anode. (Electrons, having a negative charge, are naturally attracted to positive potentials.) Because it works like a howitzer for electrons, the cathode of a CRT is often called an electron.

Dot-Pitch

No matter whether a monitor uses a shadow-mask with a dot-pitch or an aperture grille with a slot-pitch, the spacing of image triads on the screen is an important constituent in monitor quality. A monitor simply can't put dots any closer together than the holes in the mask or grille allow. It's easy to compute the pitch necessary for a resolution level in computer system. Just divide the screen size by the number of dots required to be displayed.

Graphics standards

MDA Monochrome Display Adapter (1981)
CGA Color Graphics Adapter (1981)
HGC Hercules Graphics Card (1982)
EGA Enhanced Graphics Adapter (1984)
PGA Professional Graphics Adapter (1984)
VGA Video Graphics Array (1987)
MCGA Memory Controller Gate Array (1987)
Super VGA (VESA specification) (1989)
XGA Extended Graphics Array (1990)

Interlaced graphics

Instead of scanning the image from top to bottom, one line after another, each frame of the image is broken in half into two fields. One field consists of the odd-numbered lines of the image, the other the even-numbered lines. The electron beams sweeps across and down, illuminating every other line, then starts from the top again and finishes with the ones it missed on the first pass. What this technique achieves is a apparent doubling of the frame rate. Instead of sweeping down the screen 30 times a second (the case of a normal television picture), the top-to-bottom sweep occurs 60 times a second.

MPR

The Swedish safety standard pertains to a number of aspects of monitor emissions, including x-radiation, static electrical fields, low frequency electrical fields and low frequency magnetic fields. (MPR II), published in December, 1990, MPR II extended the standard to both electrical and magnetic fields and lowered the reach of the standard to 5 Hz.

Resolution

The number that quantifies the possible sharpness of a video image is called resolution. Resolution indicates how many individual pixels can be resolved across the screen.

Shadow Masks

Just pointing the electron beams at the right dots is not enough because part of the beam can spill over and hit the other dots in the triplet. The result of this spillover is a loss of color purity-bright hues become muddied. To prevent this effect and make images as sharp and colorful as possible, all color CRTs used in computer displays and televisions alike have a shadow mask, a metal sheet with fine perforations in it, located inside the display tube and a small distance behind the phosphor coating of the screen.

VESA

Video Electronics Standards Association went beyond the initial idea of setting a hardware standard for Super VGA signals by also creating a software standard as well. VESA develop a combination of standards and guidelines that left no manufacturer in the cold nor any single set of numbers carved in stone.

Monitors Matter

The Computer Graphics Suppliers Association (CGSA) "Monitors Matter" Campaign aims to educate users on the issues of visual ergonomics. The campaign has the full support of many of the monitor industry's leading players including Aydin, Cornerstone, Eizo, Graphics Direct, Hitachi Europe, Hitachi New Media, Iiyama, Imago Micro, Mitsubishi, Sony and Termtek.

Notable exceptions to this list are Samsung, Philips, and Panasonic. Samsung told *AUI* that they were happy with their own literature and that Samsung are big enough and strong enough to get their own message across.

Philips say that they have already produced their own material stressing the importance of monitors. They are currently in the process of up-dating this and their version of Monitors Matter will be available soon. Panasonic also prefer to rely on their own in-house information.

The Monitors Matter campaign aims to encourage the public to become involved and really learn something about monitor technology through the distribution of a free Technology Guide and Monitor Evaluation Software.

The Technology Guide outlines in some detail the technological considerations that users should be aware of when specifying or purchasing a new monitor, whether as a separate purchase or as an integral part of a new system.

For further information about the 'Monitors Matter' campaign, contact: Roger Crumpton Association General Manager Computer Graphics Suppliers Association Tel: 01905 613236

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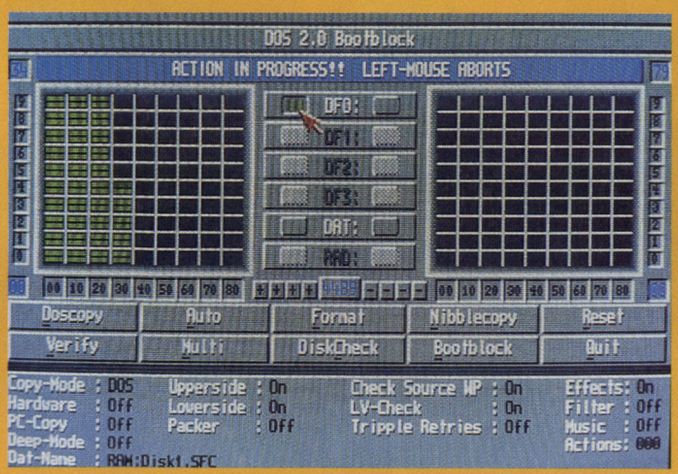
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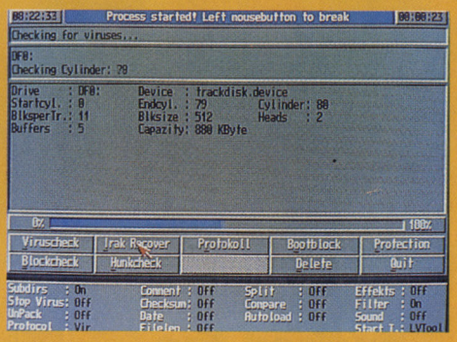
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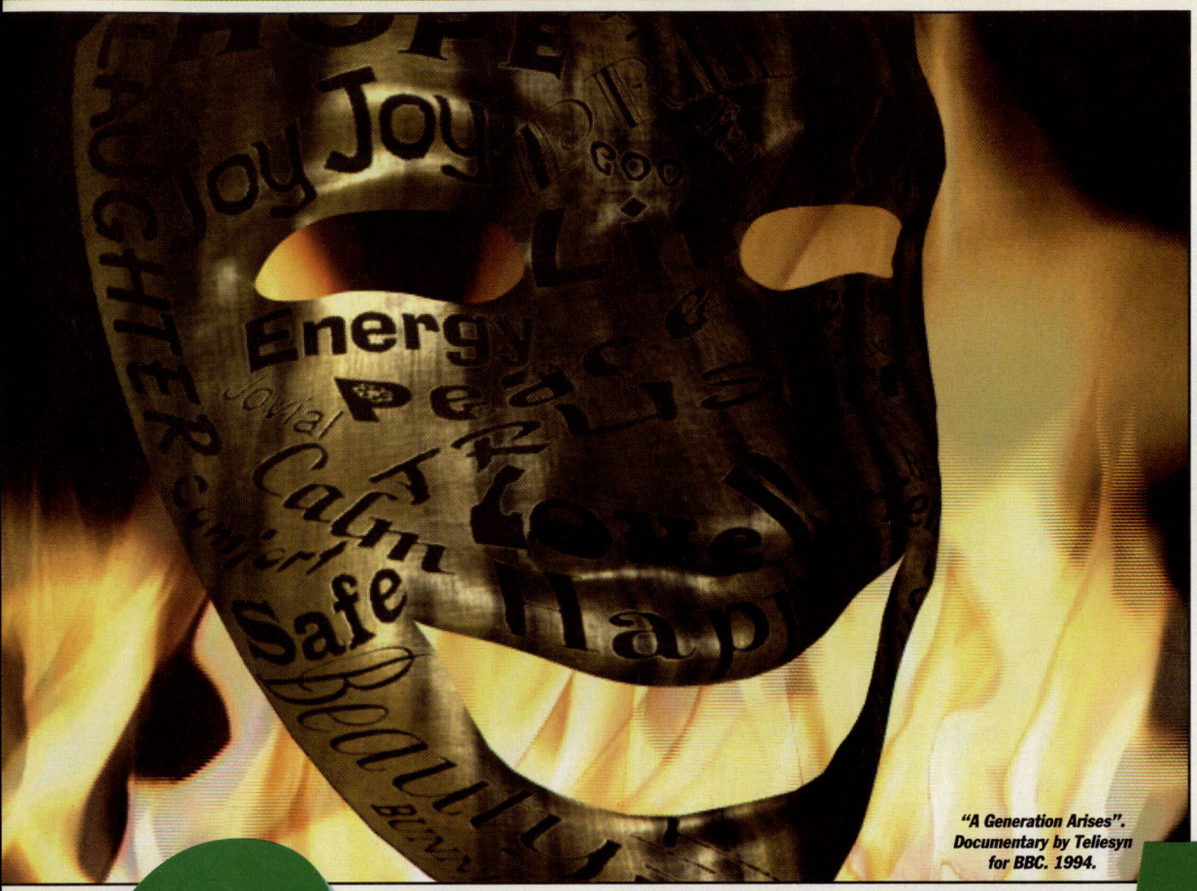
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"A Generation Arises". Documentary by Teliesyn for BBC. 1994.

Conal C

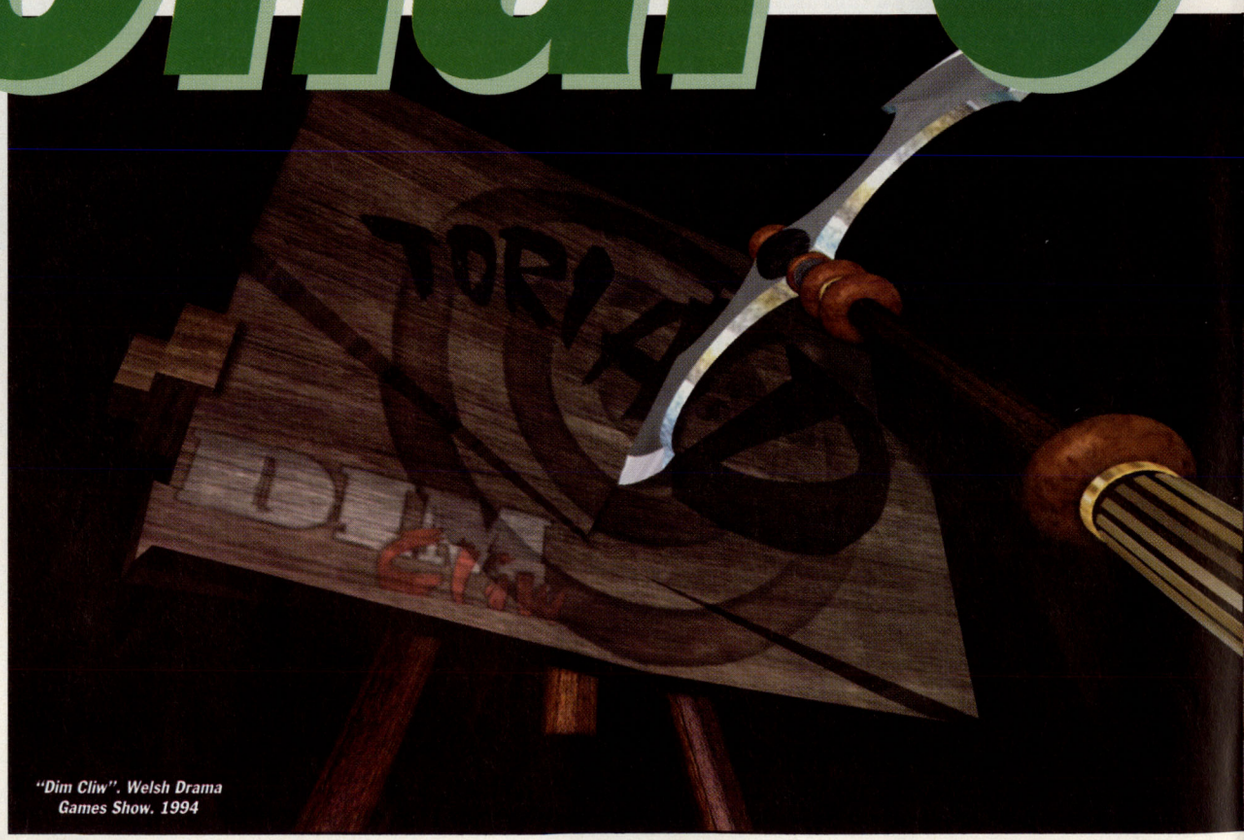
Conal Wenn who has successfully pushed the Amiga further into the world of professional computer video graphics talks to *AUI* about what the Amiga has done for him and how it needs to move into the future.

In the USA, almost since its inception, the Amiga has been regarded as a highly effective graphics machine. Now the good news... Over the past few years the Amiga has found a place in the professional graphics world in Europe. Among other high end uses, Amigas are producing professional quality images such as logos, title sequences and in-program graphics for television and video.

The bad news. Some of the professionals behind those Amiga success stories are now pushing their Amigas to one side and moving to other machines. Despite the recent buy-out of Commodore, the critical lapse in Amiga production and R&D has set back any chance of high-level Amigas in the short to medium term building up their innfluence in the demanding and fast moving graphics field.

The example: Conal Wenn is a professional Amiga user. His own company, Image Nation, was based around two slick A4000 040's, but he is now moving away from Amigas.

Image Nation produces incredible video graphics for mainstream television programs and corporate promotional videos.

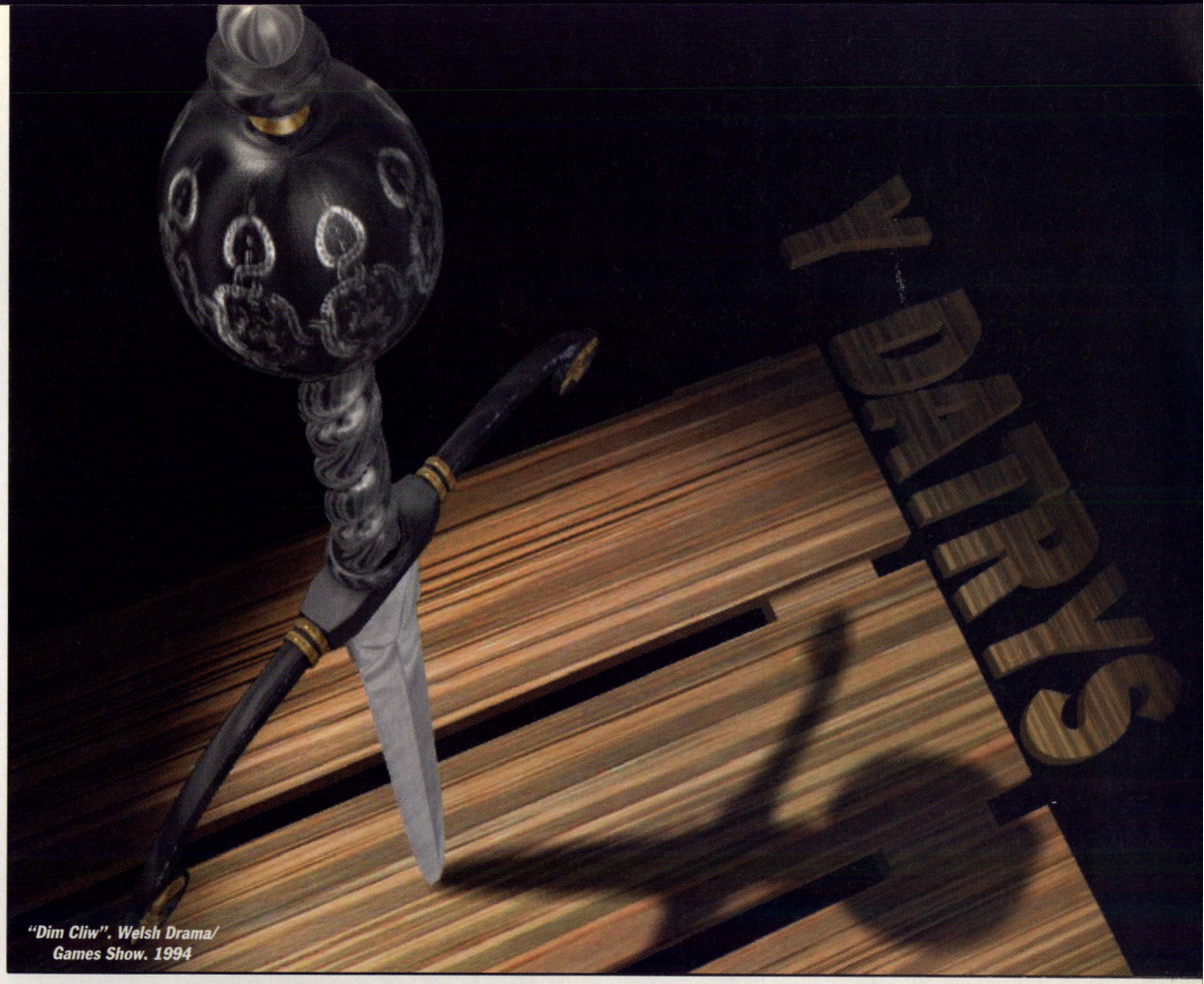


"Dim Cliw". Welsh Drama Games Show. 1994

Conal Wenn cut his teeth on image processing teeth with the C64, then the A500, while studying for a National Diploma in Computer Graphics and a Degree in Media Production. During his degree course he gained work experience freelancing for London-based graphics house, Digital Pictures.

He says the A500 was "amazing at the time", and inspired him to put his early faith in the Commodore platform. Although originally investing in A4000s, he thinks it's time to move on. "I've got to upgrade, and only a high performance rendering engine can do what I need. Let's face it, you can buy two Pentium machines for the price of an accelerated A4000 - if you can buy an A4000."

Conal Wenn has sold one of his A4000s and now owns a 64Meg 275Mhz DEC Alpha Windows NT machine networked to his remaining Amiga. In the meantime he uses Lightwave 3D on his remaining A4000 tower, for which he is getting an 060 board. Packed into that tower is a G2s broadcast i/o Imagine-Engine graphics card, 32 Meg RAM, 2.2Gig SCSI-II Personal Animation Recorder with 2 Gig Hard Drive, SCSI-II Mag-Optical, SCSI-II controller, Hydra E-net card, and Vlab. All is displayed through a 20 inch Sony Multiscan monitor, a 17 inch IDEK, Commodore 1942 and Philips CM8833-II.



"Dim Cliw". Welsh Drama/ Games Show. 1994

olour



"Dim Cliw". Welsh Drama Games Show. 1994

Conal Wenn says that the Amiga put him where he is now so he is sad the Amiga will now be taking a back seat. "It's funny when you move over to other platforms because you suddenly realise what a bloody good machine the Amiga is, except for its lack of performance in the CPU stakes. So Conal Wenn says he will keep his remaining A4000 to upgrade as soon as the illusive 060 shows up (it has!). Conal Wenn's success, and the pictures here, prove that the Amiga can produce top quality work. All you need to add is the inspiration and dedication which could yet return if the high end Amiga emerges from the wreckage of the old Commodore that ESCOM has taken over. ***AUI***

INFO

Conal Wenn
Image Nation, 2nd Floor,
33-35 Cathedral Rd, Cardiff, CF1 9HB
Tel: 01222 344 611

Graphical Fame

If you have any Amiga work which you would like ***AUI*** to show off to the world, please send us examples to:
Amiga User International,
Carriage Row, 203 Eversholt Street
London, NW1 1BW.

On Line

The Internet Column

Gary Fenton pays a visit to the Internet show and sees how some people can handsomely profit from commercialisation on the Internet

London's Wembley Conference Centre was the venue for the recent Internet World International Show. Many companies from around the UK attended demonstrating how they can be of service providing links to the Internet, software, books, and Web pages.

Virtually all the companies wanted to sell you something which is understandable, but anyone experienced with the Internet will tell you that you don't have to shell out loads of cash to become part of it. On the contrary, the Internet is your oyster (to butcher a phrase) for as little as £10 per month. So why were there companies selling Internet mail, Web browser, and expensive networking software for hard cash when you can get all of these tools in the public domain? Okay, when you pay get good quality software with technical support but take a look at what we've got for the Amiga.

Internet networking software for the Amiga called AmiTCP can be found for free as version 3, although even the advanced commercial version costs only £60 to buy. There are lots of e-mail readers in the public domain which are quite excellent, and then there's WWW browsing software like AMosaic. Admittedly the current version (1.3 beta) doesn't support every single HTML feature (hyper text markup language), but it's still in development and there are four other Web browsers for the Amiga in development too: IBrowse, Tesseract, WebLink, and Lynx.

Cashing In

Perhaps the most alarming thing I learnt from the show was the overwhelming amount of commercialisation that's going on. Talk about jumping on the bandwagon! If you thought that everyone was trying to cash in using the term "multimedia" then take a look at what the "Internet" buzzword is doing. The most financially lucrative thing anyone can do right now is to set up a company charging large amounts of money to create and maintain World Wide Web pages. "And so what?", you may ask.



Suits at the show discuss paths to profits on the Internet.

Some companies are charging over £500 to put a single page of text on the Web for a year. Now, what if I told you that the good people at Demon charge just £300 a year for a generous 5Mb of space on their Web servers? With 5Mb of space you can put hundreds of pages of text onto the Web with dozens images as well. If you want just one single image on your text page then some companies will charge you an extra £300 on top, and of you want to link one part of your page to another they'll charge you a hefty £5000 for a single link!

Little Demons

Back at the Internet show, the stand that attracted the largest audience belonged to Demon. It wasn't because of the nice looking Web pages displayed on a series of computers, or the on-site Internet experts, but the rather attractive ladies dressed up as Demons in red mini skirts. It's an age old tactic to employ glamorous ladies to promote products to punters at male dominated events. Good, isn't it?

Virtual Shopping

The London Mall won a prize for the best stand at the Internet Show. It was a small stand but nicely decorated as people came over and asked probably the most common question at the show, "What do you do?"

Micro Media Services who run The London Mall say it's a business centre, magazine and shopping complex rolled into one. The idea, like a real shopping mall, is to have a look around at what's on offer, browse through the available wares from various London shops, and perhaps buy something before you leave or when you come back next time. It doesn't cost anything to roam around the mall (and so it shouldn't!) but companies do have to pay to get a place inside the mall. You can pay a visit via your Web browser at this address: http://www.londonmall.co.uk

On the CIX stand they were demonstrating their Web service which is still in the testing stage. If all goes well their full Internet and Web service should be up and running by the time you read this. Full SLIP access to the Internet via CIX will allow anyone to indulge in all the Internet activities using AmiTCP software, IRC clients like Grapevine and Web browsers like AMosaic. Space on their servers for your own pages will be available to rent. We'll let you know as soon as CIX announce their Internet SLIP service is on-line.

Auntie's Club

The BBC Networking Club appeared at the show promoting their services as an Internet provider. The BBC have a strong presence on the Web which you can explore freely at http://www.bbcnc.org.uk while members have access to extra Web pages and information. Unfortunately they only provide software and technical support for the PC and Mac although they welcome subscriptions from Amiga users, they can't guarantee technical support. Still, I got an nice BBC carrier bag out of them at the show!



CompuServe , making an evergrowing impact on the 'net.

Overall, the Internet show was good, for the first hour anyway. Commercialisation was only too apparent shadowing the good will and friendly exchange of free information which has made the Internet so unique. Further more, there were no Amigas in sight. Plenty of PCs, Macs, and even Sparc Stations and Silicon Graphics machines. ESCOM's financial muscle behind the Amiga should eventually change things. ***AUI***

NewsAgent

Usenet is the place to be if you want to keep up to date with the latest developments in whatever interest you have. Star Trek, Amiga graphics, job hunting, it's all there. I recently came across a shareware program which lets you browse through the newsgroups without actually downloading every single message. It's particularly useful for surfing binary newsgroups.

Pictures, sounds, software, and video are uploaded daily to binary newsgroups as ASCI text which are can be converted back to their original state using freely available UUdecoding software. Binary files can be huge and downloading them all can takes hours and quickly runs up a unpleasant phone bill. NewsAgent lists the subject headings of all the newsgroup messages so you can see at a glance what's available without blindly downloading everything. Selection of the messages you want to download is done by tagging them with using point and click interface. Not all newsgroups are available to unregistered users of NewsAgent. You can probably guess which smutty but popular binary newsgroups are excluded until you've coughed up the reasonable £10 registration fee.

You can find NewsAgent on Aminet as comm/tcp/NewsAgent1_3.lha or you get more info from the author, Jason Doig at NewsAgent@pyrotek.demon.co.uk.



Demonic approach. "What are you doing after the show, Gary?". "Go away, kid, you're bothering me!"

Contacts

Demon offer direct access to the Internet and an optional site for your own WWW pages. The joining fee is £12.50 and there's a fixed monthly charge of £10 (plus VAT) for Internet access. There's no on-line fees apart from the standard BT/Mercury phone charge you'd expect to pay. Demon's voice number is 0181 371 1000 or 1234 for sales or information on WWW pricing.

CIX costs £25 to join and there's a minimum monthly charge of £6.25 (plus VAT). You must pay for each minute you're on-line to CIX which is currently 6p peak and 4p off peak, plus your usual phone bill. You can join by calling 0181 390 8446 (voice) or have your credit card ready and join instantly while on-line on 0181 390 1255 (modem).

Net News

- An Amiga version of CUSeeMe is being written, allegedly by reverse engineering the Mac version! This system allows real time video and audio conferencing through the Internet. The initial release for the Amiga will be limited to receiving but not sending video, but it's early days yet. We'll keep you posted on developments.
- The Delfina Zorro II DSP audio board with a Motorola DSP56002 processor will shortly be available for under $700, but Internet users can order it for just $400. For more info e-mail Delfina at Jyrki.Petsalo@lut.fi
- Interworks's I-Net 225 SANA-II compliant TCP/IP networking package is now available. AS225R2 utilities should work with I-Net, but a whole suite of clients, servers, and Internet utilities are included. The price starts at $349 for a 5 node licence. For more info e-mail info@iworks.com
- Brian J. Cerveny's IRC client, Grapevine, is undergoing a major overhaul starting with a new interface. Some Amiga users have said that Grapevine is the best IRC client available for any platform. We'll take a look at the new version as soon as it arrives.
- A new $99 package for the PC allows people all over the world to enjoy private international phone calls for the price of a local call. Called the Internet Phone, special compression techniques allow real time conversations by voice to take place over the Internet. There's no Amiga version but maybe a talented Amiga programmer would like a challenge?



Get your kicks on the CIX stand.

AUI On-line

If you have any news, comments, letters, or technical questions, you can contact *AUI* directly using this e-mail address:

amigauser@cix.compulink.co.uk

Or you can join our amiga_user conference on CIX, or contact me personally with e-mail at either address:

garygfx@cix.compulink.co.uk *or*

gary@auimag.demon.co.uk

PROGRAMMING TIPS

This month Paul Overaa provides ASL library notes and offers you some runable code.

Before the ASL library can be used it must, as all other libraries except exec, be opened using the exec OpenLibrary() function. Similarly it must be closed after use using CloseLibrary(). The opening and closing routines in the allocate.c source file on this month's SuperDisk use my standard stack-oriented startup/closedown procedures but typical opening and closing statements (which you'll find embedded in the code anyway) can be written as simply as this:

```
AslBase=OpenLibrary("asl.library",ASL_VERSION);
CloseLibrary((struct Library *)AslBase);
```

Once the ASL library is open it is then necessary to allocate a FileRequester structure. This is a private structure used by the ASL library routines for handling requester information and the most flexible way of creating this structure is to use the tag-oriented AllocAslRequest() function:

```
request = AllocAslRequest(type,tags_p)
D0                D0   A0

APTR   request;
ULONG  type;
struct TagItem *tags_p;
```

Since this month's example is coded in C I've chosen to use the equivalent amiga.lib function AllocAslRequestTags() version which allows tag values to be provided on the stack (ie provided as ordinary C function arguments). The result of this is that the file request can be created using this sort of code:

```
g_file_requester_p=AllocAslRequestTags(ASL_FileRequest,
ASLFR_InitialLeftEdge,ASL_X,
ASLFR_InitialTopEdge, ASL_Y,
ASLFR_InitialWidth,ASL_WIDTH,
 ASLFR_InitialHeight,ASL_HEIGHT,
TAG_DONE
);
```

In this example fragment that I've provided initial left edge, top edge, width and height information as tags using a number of constants ASL_X, ASL_Y and so on. You'll find the equivalent numerical values of these constants in my general.h header file (provided on disk). You need to free the FileRequester structure before a program terminates and the ASL library provides a routine for doing just this. The only parameter required is the file requester pointer provided when the structure was set up:

```
FreeAslRequest(g_file_requester_p);
```

Bringing Up The File Requester

To bring up the file requester a program needs to use the ASL library's AslRequest() function or its amiga.lib equivalent AslRequest-Tags(). In the example code I've again opted for the amiga.lib version and, to give you an indication of the flexibility of the requester, have used it in three different ways (each tied to a different menu option). There is a typical default requester, a requester that will not show icon (.info) files, and a version that provides a pattern box (you'll see from the example code that these versions have been produced by setting appropriate values for the ASLFR_RejectIcons and ASLFR_DoPatterns tag items).

```
request = AslRequest(request,tags_p)
D0                D0   A0

BOOL   result;
APTR   request;
struct TagItem *tags_p;
```

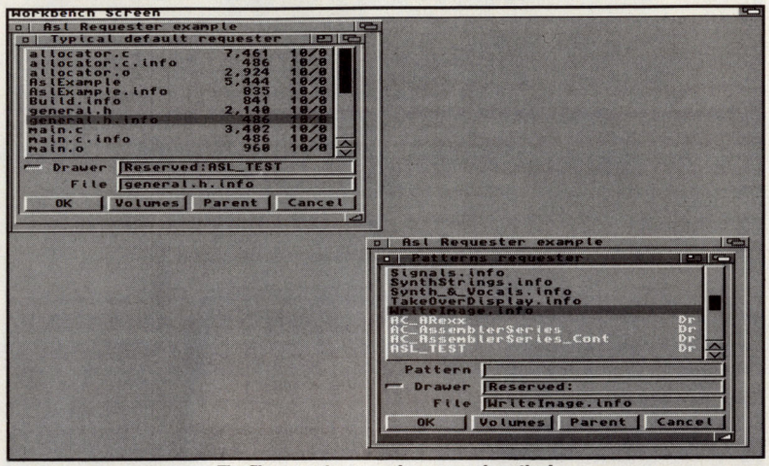
The section of the code that results in the file requesters being displayed is part of a menu handling routine and listing 1 shows the fragment of this containing the ASL library calls. I've created a simple four item gadtools menu and used a switch statement to link the menu events to various program operations (the first three items are tied to the associated three ASL requester displays while the last is tied to my program exit flag).

Cover Disk Code

The example program opens a window on the Workbench screen and allows you to display a number of different style file requesters. There are seven files on disk: the general.h header file contains include statements, constant and variable definitions and you might care to examine the way I've used conditional preprocessor directives to produce extern declarations thus allowing the file to be included in all of the example source files. Prototypes.h is another header and this holds the prototypes for the functions defined within my code.

The source itself is split into three separate files. Start.c sets up my stack ADT environment and then calls the program's initial allocation routines. The allocator.c code performs the program startup and closedown operations. It opens libraries, locks the Workbench screen, opens a window, attaches a menu and sets up the ASL FileRequest structure. Main.c is the event handling source code and this includes the fragment shown in listing 1. I've also included a makefile and a runable version of the program called AslExample. Just double click on the program's icon to run the example program.

For space reasons I've not included my stack ADT code and so if you wish to modify and recompile the example you will need copies of these files (they were provided on the coverdisk of the ***AUI*** January 95 issue). ***AUI***



The file requester example program in action!

```
/* ------------------------------------------------------------------ */
UBYTE ProjectMenuHandler(UWORD item_number)
{
UBYTE error_number=NO_ERROR;
switch (item_number)
 {
 case 0:
 AslRequestTags(g_file_requester_p,
 ASLFR_TitleText,"Typical default requester",
 ASLFR_RejectIcons,FALSE,
 ASLFR_DoPatterns,FALSE,
 TAG_DONE);
 break;
 case 1:
 AslRequestTags(g_file_requester_p,
 ASLFR_TitleText,"Reject icons requester",
 ASLFR_RejectIcons,TRUE,
 ASLFR_DoPatterns,FALSE,
 TAG_DONE);
 break;
 case 2:
 AslRequestTags(g_file_requester_p,
 ASLFR_TitleText,"Patterns requester",
 ASLFR_RejectIcons,FALSE,
 ASLFR_DoPatterns,TRUE,
 TAG_DONE);
 break;
 case 3: error_number=PROGRAM_EXIT;
 break;
 default: break;
 }
return(error_number);
}
/* ------------------------------------------------------------------ */
```

Listing 1: The menu handling code that brings up the ASL file requesters.

ARexx Info Nested Code

More help with nested ARexx code development from programming ace, Paul Overaa.

When you studied the code on last month's SuperDisk you will have noticed that, because the various routines were defined as ARexx procedures, some definitions for constant values had to be repeatedly defined within each routine.

Defining an ARexx function as a procedure is, in the main, a good thing to do because ARexx then gives that function its own 'execution environment'. This means that its variables and data are local to the function and cannot be modified by anything that happens in other areas of the program.

From the point of view of nested code development where some global values, such as constant terms, need to be accessed at different code levels this procedural isolation does however have certain problems. One possible solution, not marking the functions as procedures at all, can be discounted because it effectively makes all variables within the program global (not a useful procedure with large scripts). Passing the required values as function parameters again has its difficulties because the time taken to pass lots of parameters down through several levels of code usually results in a rather slow running program.

One seemingly good way around the above mentioned snags is to use the ARexx Expose keyword to make all required external definitions available to the procedures that need them. For one or two definitions, this arrangement works perfectly well (it would for instance be quite OK to do this with the example on last month's cover disk). However, this simple solution has two disadvantages: Firstly, if you have many terms to expose then you need to place a lot of Expose variable definitions within your code. Secondly, if you ever need to alter or add to those definitions you'll have to hunt through your code changing not only areas where the variables are used but the Expose statements as well.

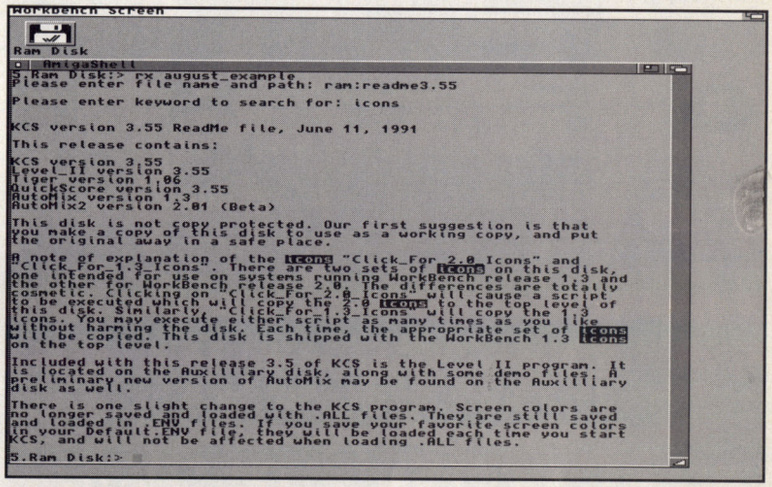
The solution I employ to avoid these snags is based on the use of ARexx's compound variable scheme. By defining a global stem 'g.' and using this as the basis for all static definitions all that needs to be done to make the whole set visible to a procedure is to make the stem itself visible using a single 'Expose g.' declaration. As an example look at the code fragment in listing 1 (taken from last month's code).

```
OpenNotOK: Procedure
LINEFEED  = '0A'x
BELL   = '07'x
ERROR_MESSAGE = 'Sorry cannot open this file'
Writech(stdout,ERROR_MESSAGE||LINEFEED||BELL)
return
```

Listing 1: An example procedure with constant declarations

Here we have two control characters, Linefeed and Bell, and some error message text defined within the routine itself. To re-define them using the stem arrangement just discussed all we would need to do is place these modified definitions at the start of the program code.

```
g.  = 0
g.LINEFEED  = '0A'x
g.BELL  = '07'x
g.ERROR_MESSAGE = 'Sorry cannot open this file'
```



This is the type of word highlighting that this month's example code performs.

If we do this the routine shown in listing 1 then reduces to that shown in listing 2 below:

```
OpenNotOK Procedure expose g.
Writech(stdout,g.ERROR_MESSAGE||g.LINEFEED||g.BELL)
return
```

Listing 2: The stem based version of listing 1.

As you can see the stem technique physically reduces the size of the procedures themselves but the more important advantage is that we're back to a situation where any single constant definition is defined in only one place within the source. This of course makes for easier program maintenance and, needless to say, becomes increasingly important as scripts become larger.

New Version

For those of you who missed last month's issue (and you should quite rightly hang your head in shame) we developed a script that was able to highlight all occurrences of a specified keyword in a chosen textfile. There is a new, stem based, version of this example script on this month's SuperDisk and near the start of the code you'll see the set of stem oriented definitions for various control characters and program text.

Open a shell window, copy the august_example script and the test text file (called 'testfile') to the ram disk, and then make ram: the current directory (by typing... cd ram:). Then run the script using ARexx's RX command like this...

```
rx august_example
```

When prompted for the name of a file enter 'testfile' and for the keyword type 'august'. The result will be that the test file gets displayed with the word August highlighted. Try the script with your own text files and keywords and then look at the various routines, modify them and experiment using the same sort of nested code ideas in your own scripts.

As mentioned last month this type of code arrangement has a lot going for it when developing larger scripts and you may also be surprised just how quickly the use of stem variables fall into place once you start making regular use of them! ***AUI***

10 YEARS OF THE AMIGA

PART FOUR

In the last part of our retrospective series, Ten Years of the Amiga, Mike Nelson and Mark Blackham celebrate "Sheer Entertainment", the history of the Amiga as a great games machine.

Sheer Entertainment

Despite the desperate and even duplicitous claims of some "serious" Amiga users, most of us also use our favourite computer to play games - occasionally.

Those who deride game-playing are refusing to countenance the use of computers for one of their most potent talents - sheer entertainment. And if they have never used their Amigas for that their computing lives must have been pretty dull.

As any game player, those of us professionally involved with games or using them as light relief between computer-based chores have our favourites. They may not be everybody's favourites but each of us has different ideas of what sheer entertainment really is.

If our retrospective rantings miss your favourite game, you can console yourself that your totally addictive choice is worth as much as ours. Yes, we're sure it was a beauty. We probably loved it too. We either forgot about it, or couldn't fit in a reference to it. Or maybe we just don't agree with what you thought was really hot. That's understandable, because in compiling this mini-guide we realised there was an absolute mountain of great games worthy of a mention. After all the Amiga was the best 16 bit games machine ever created.

We played, er... re-tested, lots and lots of games, and whittled the best - our view - down to the following gems.

Brilliant Machine

No great computer game is possible without a brilliant computing engine to run it. The Amiga is just that. The advanced nature of the 16 bit games showed how powerful the Amiga is for all manner of applications.

Snappy, colourful graphics, a blitter coprocessor, stereo sampled sounds and a relatively fast processor suggests a machine that plays mean games. The Amiga is without doubt the best games machine on the planet - it has been for ten years, and there is still nothing to touch it as a home computer - I don't care what anyone says, a PC cannot zap aliens like even an Amiga 500; a 3DO just isn't a computer.

Old Daze

The state of the art of computer games a decade ago revolved primarily around shoot 'em ups, basic text (and, if you were lucky, graphic) adventures and the occasional beat 'em up or platform game. However, there were also the riveting oddities like Elite, and action-strategy games like Spin Dizzy.

The Amiga provided a whole new dimension of power for games programmers to exploit. Aside from the obvious colours and sound, there was 512K of RAM to play with and, of course, every machine had a disk drive. It is perhaps ironic that nowadays we bemoan the fact that a game isn't hard drive installable and we have to wait a few minutes to load it.

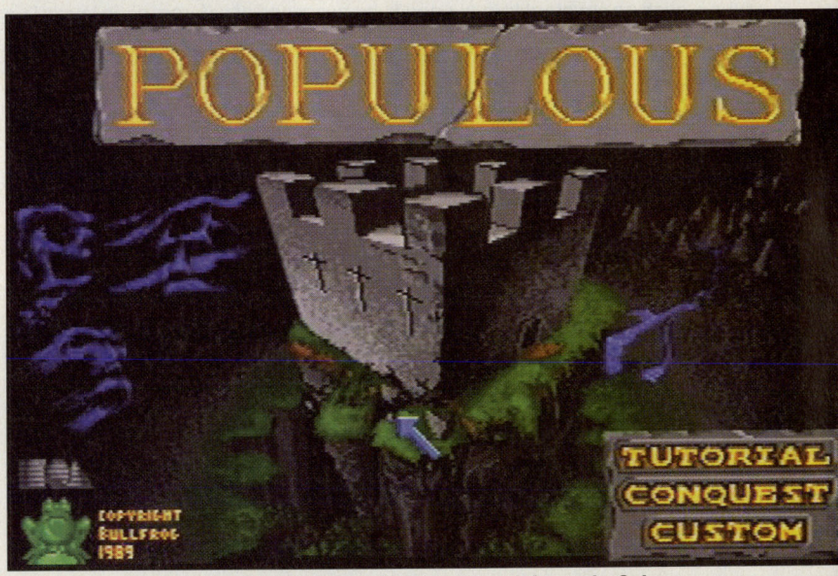
Shudder when you remember, as we do (no, we're not THAT old) the days when you'd wait twenty minutes to load a game from a cassette, only to find that the fridge motor cutting in stuffed the transfer of the audio information, or that your kid brother taped Adam and the Ants off the radio over your prized game cassette.

The games industry was a bright and bubbling place when the Amiga was born, with lots of innovative ideas.

Beginning

The first inkling of the power of the Amiga came with an early demo of a game called Mindwalker. An action adventure, originally commissioned and marketed by Commodore themselves, to no great avail because they never brought it out as a commercial product. It was a spooky concept of a game in which you had gone insane and had to escape from your own madness to increasing levels of sanity. Well, something like that anyway. A superb game with great and for the time astounding graphics and one which we've missed for years, so if anyone has a copy please send it in!

The game which really put the Amiga on the map was undoubtedly Marble Madness, marketed by a small American company called Electronic



Populous - one of the most memorable chances for atheists to play God.



Parallax scrolling gave extra dimension of standard platformer games like Shadow of the Beast.

Arts, who later became a very big American company still called Electronic Arts. It would be churlish to point out the relative success of Commodore and EA, but there is yet another inescapable irony that 3DO is now the premier games console, designed and programmed by ex-Amiga engineers. Anyway, back to Marble Madness and the stunning graphics and sound were, it is safe to say, easily on a par with the arcade machine, a mouse helping to create the frantic control method of the latter.

Not long after this a new American company called CinemaWare was started by entrepreneur Bob Jacobs and a programmer-cum-artist called Jim Sachs revealed Defender of the Crown, a medieval strategy game with the most breathtaking animated graphics and sound imaginable. I don't think many would disagree that even today, only the Amiga is capable of playing a game like this which, it must be remembered ran off floppies.

The jousting sequences are legendary; God only knows how much horsepower (sic!) and storage a PC would need to even get close. CinemaWare had a meteoric rise and equally rapid demise as the resources to generate these "so atmospheric you could almost be there" games outgrew the sales. Jim Sachs went on the design the excellent user interface for CDTV and also CD32 except Commodore didn't use it in the latter machine for reasons best known to themselves. (Rumour has it they couldn't get the animation to run on the AGA architecture in time for release).

The Editor of ***AUI*** was responsible for the first copy of Defender of the Crown being shown to the public in the UK and, according to him, the beginning of the success of the Amiga in Europe... Chatting up a girl at Mindscape in Chicago, through which Defender of the Crown was to be distributed, he heard of the game and coaxed her into sending him a beta copy. After getting the exclusive review done for ***AUI*** he showed the game to the then MD of Commodore UK. Blown away by the sheer quality of the game, the MD resorted to threats and promises of an exaggerated nature to be lent "Defender of the Crown" to put the game on the Commodore stand at the Commodore Show which was taking place at the time. Succumbing to "bungs" such as promises for scoops of upcoming products, "Defender of the Crown" - the unique copy in Europe was passed over and displayed.

The Editor hung around the Commodore stand desperately worried as the crowd literally fifty deep oohed and aaahed at the single machine showing the game, afraid that someone might steal it or copy it. The CBM MD promised to guard it with his life and get it back to ***AUI*** after the Show where it was the biggest sensation and was credited to have started the demand for Amiga 500s in large numbers just to play that stunning game. The final scene where the heroine divested herself of her wimple or whatever medieval lasses wore under their cloaks and gave her all to you, the Defender, as the Editor tells it, alone sold thousands of machines.

Mirrorsoft picked up the game immediately for the UK and their career in games started with it. Ironically, Jim Mackonchie, the then boss of Mirrorsoft, after a spell at Commodore, has become a boss at Mindscape, no longer based in Chicago but now in the UK.

And, sadly the Editor reports, that like many Commodore promises, the one made to return his personal copy of Defender of the Crown was not fulfilled. He never saw - or played - it again. The same, he says, is true of the girl in Mindscape, Chicago, who, he comments, was his real idea of sheer entertainment, especially at that last moment when she divesting herself... Ah, but this article is not about that kind of game.

3D Experience

Three dimensional games require some intensive processor work, so the first Amigas made the programmer's dreams a reality. OK, so the early attempts were a little basic by today's standards, but they had not been seen anywhere previously.

3D got off the ground, so to speak, with the 8-bit Elite, but it was Starglider from Argonaut which captured the imagination of Amiga owners. Also coded on the Atari ST, it was the superior version of the Amiga which helped convince the public that the Commodore machine had more than an edge over its arch rival. Not a particularly enthralling game, Starglider had fast wireframe graphics, digitised sounds (remember that "Missile launched?").



DungeonMaster took us into an errie 3D world of dungeons, dragons and mystery.



D&D was computerised with classic games like Eye of the Beholder.

Jez San, founder of Argonaut and programmer later went on to produce a sequel with the fastest moving solid graphics and we still waiting for Starglider III; it might be a long wait as Jez seems to be more into the console world of Nintendo and Sega. Sniff!

Chess

Graphics and sound was the order of the day for the most part and even the noble game of chess was given the treatment. Battlechess, again from Electronic Arts, redefined the game using amusing and witty animations when moving the pieces according to conventional rules. The Queen was really a bit of a tart with a famously wiggly posterior and a deadly spell for poor pawns, powerless to resist. The castles were huge hulking stone monsters who stomped their way across the screen. It actually played a pretty mean game of chess too!

Playing God

God games were also a welcome change to the scene, and the first of these was Populous from Bullfrog and the game was distributed by Electronic Arts (there are loads of writers, but very few publishers of games these days. Such is life). The idea was that the computer controlled people who would build houses and go about their daily conquests according to their numbers and facilities; it was up to you, the God, to raise and lower land to allow them the optimal terrain for survival. Hitting your opponent with a volcano or swamp right where it hurts can really make your day! Civilisation took a step back from the close-up scenery of Populous to let you develop civilisations from the start to the end.

This realistic building theme was carried on in games like Sim City where you got to build up a city from components such as railways, power stations and roads, allowing the computer people to move in and out as the prevailing conditions allow.

Strategy games appealed to those who wanted to test their brains. The ability to recreate great battles of history attracted people to Campaign, Supremacy and Historyline 1914-1918.

D&D

The immense popularity of Dungeon's and Dragons ensured the concept was quickly adopted by computer games. They took various styles - the more game-play orientated ones like DungeonMaster, with its scary atmosphere, and Eye of the Beholder, which astutely computerised the classic dice role and hit points. Then there were the pure graphic action adventures like the Ultimo series, where you guided characters about a world, solving puzzles, picking up goodies and killing baddies.

Sports

Sports simulations, apart from football, have rarely worked on any computer platform. The trouble is that game playing is a subjective business. Nothing demonstrates this better than the personal preferences for various soccer simulations. The first universally acclaimed game Kick Off, from Anco, then ruled the roost for many years. No game managed to draw similar adulation until Microprose Soccer and its later development from the same programming team. The Sensible World of Soccer smashed its way almost permanently into the charts.

Talking about Sensible brings to minds their other unforgettable game which grabbed a fist hold on our gaming interest for the last few years - Cannon Fodder. Great intro, personality, humour and lot's of shooting, exploding action.

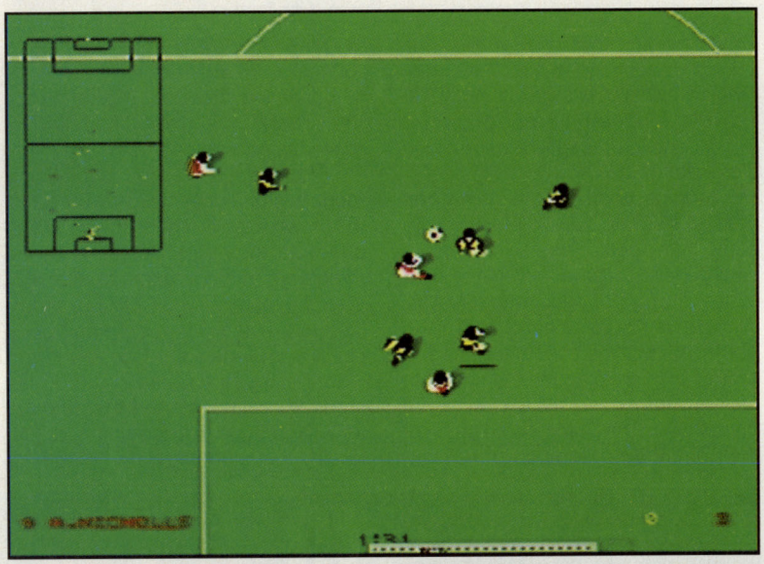
A kind of sport game which did manage to induce strained wrists, thumbs and eyes was Speedball. Fast action, futuristic setting and the infusion of an American football concept, made this one of the best loved sport games of all time.

Speedball, from the Bitmap Brothers, succeeded because, like the best games, it went further than just the on-screen action. It included a strategy dimension where players could choose their team, apportion equipment and such like.

That extra dimension of thought involved in playing a game is what keeps us playing.

When strategy is combined with originality, the software houses have a sure-fire winner. A game which had these qualities in abundance was Lemmings by DMA Design and published by Psygnosis, who had brought the very first UK-created Amiga game, Brattacus. Just about every adjective has been used to describe Lemmings, a game which, for those who've been comatose for a decade, involves the computer releasing a bunch of particularly stupid, self-destructive creatures who will cheerfully walk to all manner of miserably deaths without your intervention.

Using a variety of "specialist" Lemmings which can climb, build, or even blow up, the aim is simply to save as many as possible to progress. The programming in this game was excellent, making a fortune for the publishers and eventually spawning PC and Apple versions which showed the awesome power of an A500 for playing games - try comparing them on a 486 and an 030 MAC. A sequel or two with



Anco's Kick Off - slam that ball into the back of the net.



Indi 500 - see that mammoth crash from multiple angles!

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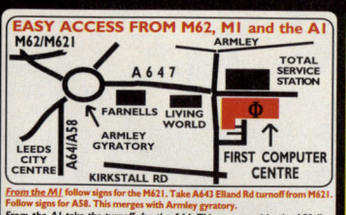
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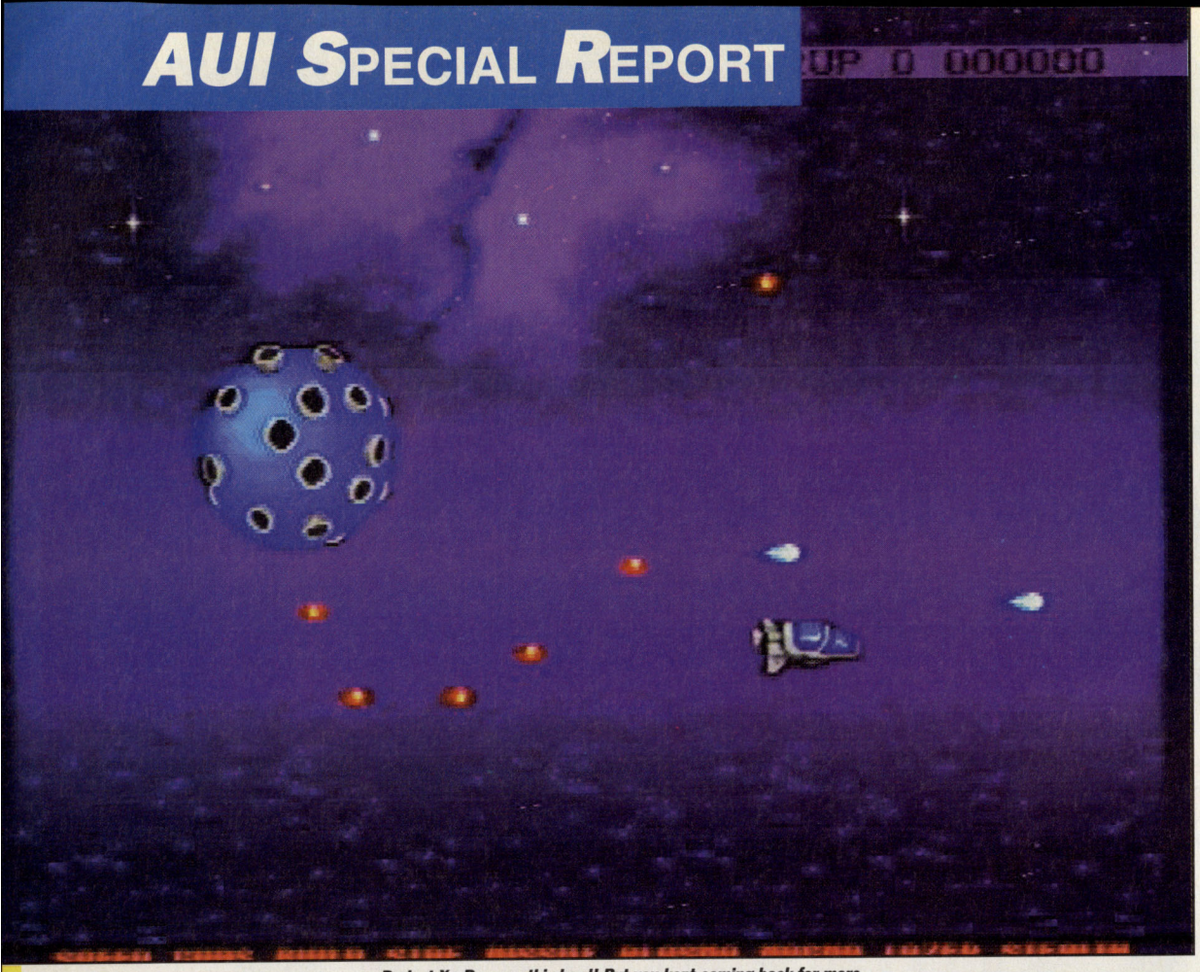
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Project X - Boy was this hard! But you kept coming back for more.

the odd Christmas edition also kept the Lemming bandwagon rolling. It also showed what an original idea can do and there are very few original ideas in computer games but a huge number of clones of the few innovative concepts.

Driving On

Vehicle driving games were pumped out faster than a cars from Ford factory, but few really lived up to the promise. The two that did impress through their realistically smooth speed and graphics were Formula One Grand Prix and Indianapolis 500. Both of them have you swaying in your seat as you take the bends. Indi 500 had the added bonus of replaying those rip-roaring crashes from a number of gory angles. Oh that smarts!

Blast'em!

A hearty session of simplistic alien-bashing is always welcome relief from the complexities of modern life. The Amiga did this superbly well. Parallax scrolling - that much hyped technique - helped give weird dimensions to otherwise plain games. End of level guardians - the ugly sods you had to defeat to advance to the next level - came in ever-more difficult forms.

R-Type and Project X are generally acclaimed by those who know, and those who don't, to have been the ultimate side-on view, scrolling alien-bash. Realistically it is hard to add any more bits to the format so anything else was generally a good or poor imitation of what R-Type and Project X achieved.

As for those top down scrolling alien-bashes we had the long-lasting Chaos Engine - kept rightfully at the top by inclusion in Silica's own Amiga bundles. Buzzing music, constant action and intriguing levels - it was a beauty.

Other favourites include Alien Breed, which captured in a game that nightmare concept first started with the Alien movies. I still remember feeling the hair on the back of my neck stand up as the aliens roared down the corridor, and feeling relieved in the relative safety of the crackling, unstable, INTEX on-line system.

It is a shame that the Amiga never managed to get the 3D Star Wars games like X-Wing. We do have, thank the great lord of gaming, Wing Commander. Although the Amiga struggled at times to keep it smooth, the dog-fights in space as part of a long term epic battle were just superb.

Dog-fights in our atmosphere have been abundant. Interceptor, the first flight and fight F16 simulation, remained a favourite long after its graphics seemed tired, simply because of its style and ease-of-play.

More realistic simulations, which attempted to be just like the real thing, were ruled by F117A, Falcon and A-10 Tank Killer.

Other flight simulations opted for a middle ground - combining realistic flying elements in a game context that created a whole environment. B17 Flying Fortress let you take over a beautiful bombing machine for a chain of missions, while Wings took you through the whole of WW1, if you survived, flying those old bi-planes against the Red Baron's mates.



Chaos Engine combined pumping music with ragingly good shoot-em up game play.

Nelson's Column

It's pretty difficult to write a ten year review of all the thousands of games which have been released and I'm sure there'll be a lot of criticism about our choices of which to include for a mention. Sorry about that, but ***AUI*** has never been a games oriented magazine (and we hope never will be), as we prefer to concentrate on the more serious user. The Amiga has played a central role in the development of computer games, and it's not stretching the point to mention that CDTV was the first CD-ROM based machine in the market place.

Commodore's legendary inability to capitalise on ground-breaking technology, coupled with the surge in PCs being used for recreational purposes has possibly been to the detriment of the games industry as a whole. Programmers, understandably, work to the limitations of the hardware for which they write, and also the biggest market achievable. Until a few years ago, the A500 with 1 Mb of RAM and no hard drive was the limit, but PCs changed all that, and suddenly programmers had to deal with hard drives, seriously limited graphics potential (relative to the Amiga, anyway) and a non-standard architecture.

Gradually people pulled out of the Amiga market, especially in the US, and games houses concentrated development on PC projects, maybe converting their software to the Amiga. Now a game which runs OK on a PC will usually be hopeless on an Amiga, especially the low end ones as the architecture is so fundamentally different. Heck, Amigas were built to play fast games as well as anything else you'd care to ask of them, God knows why PCs were even built. PCs can't run decent, smooth animation and play sound without using vast resources. Amigas don't generally have vast resources so there is an obvious discrepancy and the marketing decisions to make PC products changed the face of the games scene for the worst.

Gone were innovative graphics extravaganzas with new concepts in gameplay, to be replaced by complicated strategy efforts, hideous flight simulators and driving games, and also endless film tie-ins with little or no gameplay. The Amiga's demise was, I think, the beginning of a deep rut for the games industry. This was compounded by the popular resurgence of Sega/Nintendo consoles with their endless platform romps and Karate Kid meets Ninja Turd from Hell type nonsense. Let's face it, games these days, suck! Mightily!

Until the new Amiga takes the lead on these issues or PCs get more graphically adept, we are, it seems, stuck with the stream of rubbish coming from the games world. Depression, it seems, for me, is only to be lifted by the public domain games like Deluxe Galaga which have genuine gameplay and that missing something called playability. Jeff Minter, mentioned as an old time hero yonks ago has produced a couple of Amiga programs, his best probably being a version of Gridrunner which remains a blast in the old mode, complete with all the Pink Floyd symbols of yesteryear. Just think what Revenge of the Mutant Camels could look like on the Amiga!

No Shame

Major computer companies sold their machines on the strength of boring business applications for ages, and reaped the results. They now realise the future of the computer as a common piece of household electronics is in part dependent on the entertainment aspect. Sheer entertainment is big business.

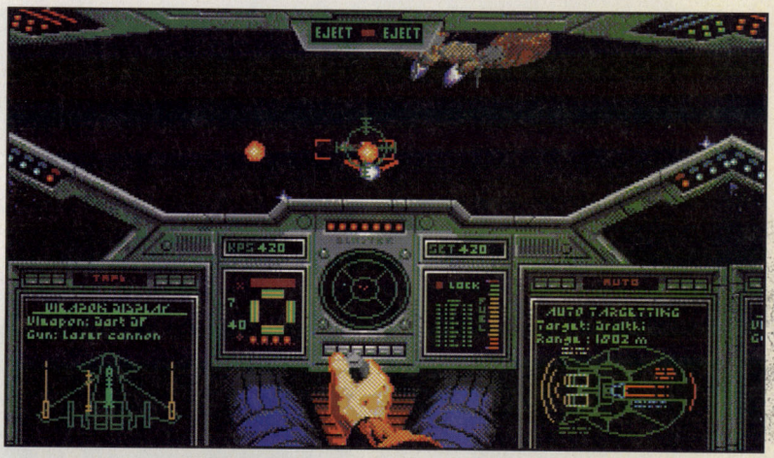
The Amiga has played a major part in this development by providing an advanced platform for game construction, and a user-base which seeks cleverly crafted entertainment (not unimaginative console-type games).

According to recent computer game software charts, over half the sales were for the Amiga. Amiga users, even the serious ones, play games.

The universal popularity of games means some which will go down in Amiga history may be being produced even as you read this article. We'll include them in our celebration of twenty years of the Amiga! ***AUI***



Judging by the number of flight and fight simulations, we all harbour a desire to be an airborne hero.



Wing Commander - smashing space fighter simulation.



The Blue and the Grey - colourful war strategy simulation.

The AUI Top Ten Memorable Amiga Games

(In no special order)

Dungeon Master
Eye of the Beholder
Interceptor
Kick Off
Lemmings
Marble Maze
Menace
Shadow of the Beast
Speedball
Populous

If you don't agree and have a list of your own, send it in to us.

The AUI Top Ten Influential Amiga Game Companies

(In no special order)

Electronic Arts
Microprose
Psygnosis
Bullfrog
Team 17
Bitmap Brothers
Mirrorsoft
Mindscape
Origen
SSI

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Get outa my way Schumacher and taste my copious amounts of carbon monoxide.

F1 World Championship Edition

Domark / All Amigas
£29.99

Years have passed since I've played a racing game of this type. It's not the realistic F1 Grand Prix or Indi 500 but, as you can see from the pictures, but follows the traditional original car racing format.

Your Formula 1 car stays in the middle of the screen and the track and opposition move around you.

The originals were very sad affairs by today's standards, but they were pioneers. F1 is about the end of the line for that genre and style of programming. It is about as good as it's going to get.

The graphic performance is very quick and smooth. There isn't much external detail, however the 3D perspective is pretty good. I still hate the bland shifting background that is meant to help signify movement. The gameplay is a decent challenge. If it's too easy you can always beef up the strength of your opposition and lengthen the lap count for each race.



It's the pits being in the pits, watching your opponents speed past.

Sonically the game is unimpressive, especially in-game, where the sounds are limited to the usual engine roar and tyre squeal. The engine treatment is fine, including the approach and disappearance of opposition cars, and when you rip under tunnels.

The tyre noise is pathetic, and distracts from your suspension of disbelief (you want to feel like you're in a real race).

Operating the car is easy via the joystick or keyboard. You accelerate the car by moving forward the joystick forward, brake by pulling back.

Gear changes, if you haven't selected automatic, are via a fire button and joystick combination wiggle.

The races themselves are available as simple practice runs, as a knockout series where you must continue to be in the first eight finishers, and a full championship season.

Here's your chance to elbow your way into a realistic F1 Championship season.

The first thing to do is call up the computer file on the famous teams like Lotus, Ferrai, Benetton, William and McLaren. Choose the team you want to race for and then select the drivers from whom you want to take over. Pretend you're Damon Hill, pair yourself with Schumacher, or kick Berger off the team and take over his driving duties.

For a reason which may appeal to you, there is the option of setting the track order in which the championship season will run. If you hate lots of tight corners, as I do, you can choose to first take on the tracks with more straights.

Pre-race preparations and pit-stop activities include management of fuel intake, tyre type (keep an eye on the weather because it can start raining in the middle of a race), and wing setting.

During the race keep an eye on the little circle at the top left of the screen. It indicates things like your car damage and fuel level, and when it's time to get into the pit.

You can crash into objects on the side of the track, and moving off the track onto the grass slows you down. Crashes will stop you dead, and lead to mounting damage. Your car will be moved back onto the track for the accelerator to be stepped on.

We're talking here about a tried and tested formula which hasn't been seen for a little while. It's great to have it back - I didn't realise I'd missed a wholesome all-out race without too many complications.

VERDICT

Graphics:	81%
Sound:	70%
Gameplay:	84%
Overall:	78%

Gloom

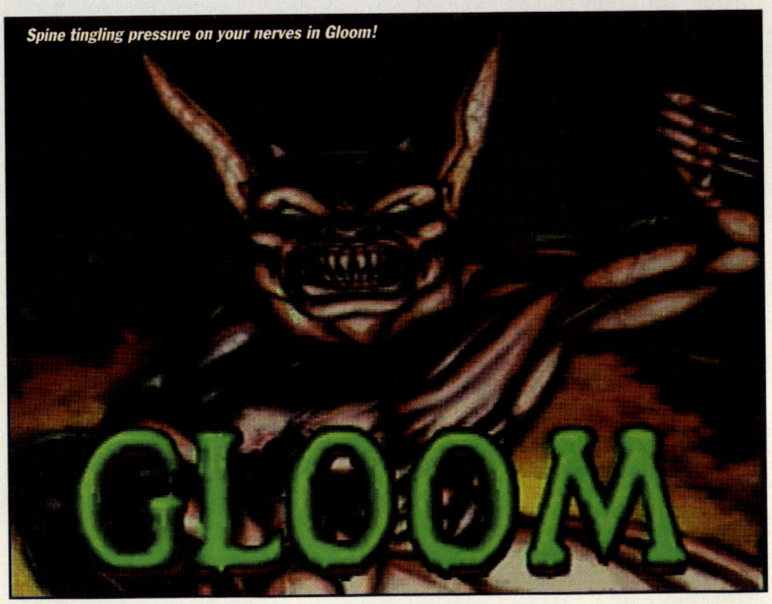
Guildhall Leisure / A1200-CD32 / £29.99

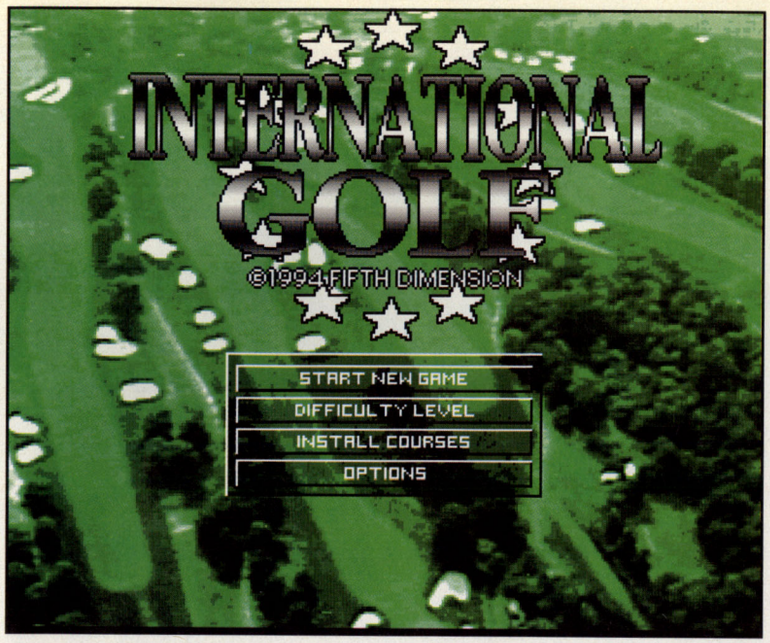
AUI have secured an advance look at this Doom clone via a special demo. We were mightily impressed. Guildhall Leisure have been trying to hit the spot with their own published software this year, but haven't really had the top notch product. This time they've cracked it, via the undeniable programming skills of "Black Magic", an outfit comprising of some of the renowned Skidmarks team.

The action takes place within a rather small centred box on the screen - but what action it is. Smooth scrolling, pressure situations, gory body splattering, weapon pick-ups. This is, judging by the demo, the best version of Doom yet available for the Amiga.

We'll review the whole game soon, we hope.

Spine tingling pressure on your nerves in Gloom!





International Golf

Saddletramps PD / All Amigas / £14.99

We reviewed a demo of International Golf in last month's PD column, where it was awarded a very admirable 80%. The full game is now available so we thought we'd swing the club through a few rounds to check it out.

I've done my nut about golf and golf simulations in past reviews. The game simply isn't gripping enough to provide a computer-game buzz and hold interest.

That makes me both the worst, and the best, person to review golf games. Worst because I dislike them, best, because if a game can impress me, it must be pretty good.

International Golf impressed me. It has a Public Domain pedigree, but is a full commercial product - and looks every inch like one.

Golf is not exactly a programming challenge - so it's a good first step into the commercial world.

The winning factor about Int. Golf is its ease of play. I have not experienced a golf game as readily playable, yet retaining the essential depths of realism.

It's not going to win awards or wow you with stunning graphics or sound. In fact, there is no sound for the ball dropping into the cup - a very poor omission depriving you of that important signifier of a satisfying completion to a hole.

Yet Int. Golf has that important playable factor. Selecting a club, choosing your direction, and whacking the hell out of the ball is easy, fun and a little challenging.

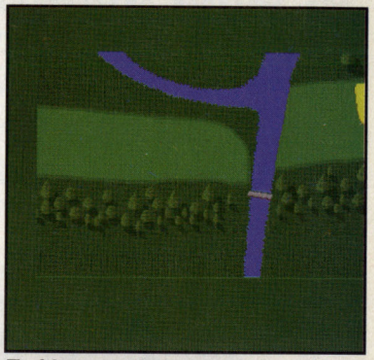
The putting green is ingeniously arranged, with tiny direction arrows indicating the ground contours.

It has the required flexibility and options - like 64 computer controlled players, four people playing at one time, full tournaments, putting practice, driving range and head to head battles.

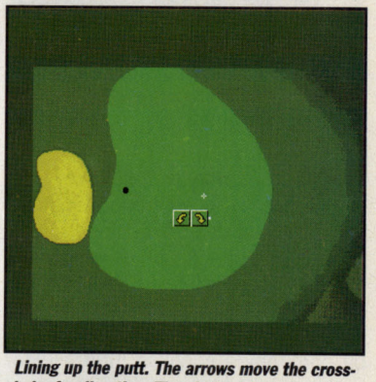
For a fully fledged golf simulation you're better off with something like Ocean's PGA European Golf tour (twice the price). If you're intrigued with the concept of a golf game and would enjoy a few rounds (beer or golf), then give this game a bash.



The menu screen - easy to choose a club, prepare the power of your shot, aim, and fire.



The fairway - not the best scenery in a golf game, but the emphasis is on playing.



Lining up the putt. The arrows move the cross-hairs for direction. Then I shoot by determining the power of the putt.

VERDICT

Graphics:	67%
Sound:	61%
Gameplay:	68%
Overall:	66%

ViroCop

Renegade / All Amigas £25.99

I'm a tad exasperated by ViroCop. Although not a bad little operator, it is let down by the pointlessness. No amount of goo ladelled from a corny ideas factory can hide the fact that there is no honest story-line or plot.

ViroCop gives you the feeling that someone came up with a cute hovering robo-character, some vague ideas for theme-related environment and the bosses said "Let there be a game." There wasn't.

Now I've got that bit of bile out of my stomach I'll turn to the positive aspects of ViroCop, of which there are many.

There is no doubt that D.A.V.E - the Digital Armoured Virus Exterminator - is cute and well-animated. His head bobbles as you jump over ramps. He swerves and spins oozing lovingly tailored sprites and appeal.

He is apparently beamed into four zones (each made up of multiple levels) with a mission to get rid of all the viruses. I'm not sure what these viruses actually are, but there's plenty of entertaining and intriguing opposition, which must be them.

There are toy remote controlled airplanes dropping bombs, people on space hoppers, tennis ball firing machines, baseball bat and glove shooting deadly baseballs, groundhogs spitting exploding golfballs, racing cars, and so on. That's just in the "sports" zone.

The character of the game, if there is one, is in the eclectic mixture of wierd and wonderful enemies and bizarre environments.

The first level of the sports zone, for example, moves from snooker tables (dodge the balls) to golf fairways. The second is orientated around Amiercian football fields, running tracks and athletic fields. The third level sees you dodging formula one cars.

Yes, it's all very zany and mad, mad, mad.

For me the attraction and challenge of this out-of-left-field style doesn't last too long. It feels more like



DAVE has just been mashed on the ice-hockey arena.

a race through a Mad Hatter maze of bouncy castles with no idea why the hell you're there.

It's a lot of fun, but without a feeling of purpose, those upper levels may rarely be tested.

This is a shame because the game is brilliantly coded. It's smooth, bright, extremely well defined, and incredibly quick. I hope the effort hasn't been wasted.



Career around screen after screen of wierd enemies and wierder environments. I'm been attacked by hounds in balloons.

VERDICT

Graphics:	90%
Sound:	72%
Gameplay:	79%
Overall:	75%

CHIPS AWAY! Part 2

In the second part of our Special Report "Chips Away!" John Taylor leads the *AUI* team investigating the RISC family of microprocessors. RISCs, dominated by the now famous PowerPC chips, are the cutting edge of microprocessor technology. Are they the Amiga's future?

What is CISC and RISC? You are probably using a CISC-based computer now but in the not too distant future you may well swap it for a computer at whose heart there beats a RISC chip.

CISC? Complex Instruction Set Computing. RISC? Reduced Instruction Set Computing. Traditional CISC-based computing, such as we do with the Amiga, is executed by chips like the 68000 Motorola family or the X86 style range of chips produced for PCs by companies such as Intel. Higher end workstations, needing faster and more powerful computing, have brought into being the RISC technology and this has been released to a larger public through the cooperation of IBM, Apple and Motorola in the PowerPC Macs which especially in the DTP field have been a substantial success with production of the PowerPC chips now well into the second million.

There is now a growing groundswell of support for RISC technology even in games machines such as 3DO's M2 which was unveiled recently and welcomed as "lightning fast." When RISC chip machines start to penetrate the home you can be sure that the whole computing world will sit up and take notice. So what's so special about RISC that makes it the latest thing in both business and entertainment computing?

John Cocke at IBM's Yorktown Research Laboratory analysed the usage of instructions by computers and discovered that most of the work done by computers involves relatively few instructions. For example, given a computer with a set of 200 instructions, two-thirds of its processing involves using as few as 10 of the total instructions. Cocke went on to design a computer that was based on a few instructions that could be executed quickly. He is credited with inventing the Reduced Instruction Set Computer or RISC in 1974. In contrast, microcode-based systems with large instruction sets have become known as Complex Instruction Set Computers or CISC designs. In 1987, Cocke's work on RISC won him the Turing Award (named for computer pioneer Alan M. Turing, known best for his Turing Test definition of artificial intelligence), given by the Association for Computing Machinery as its highest honour for technical contributions to computing.

Cocke's research showed that most computing was done by basic instructions, not by the more powerful, complex, and specialized instructions. Further research at the University of California at Berkeley and Stanford University demonstrated that there were even instances where a sequence of simple instructions could do a complex task faster than a single complex instruction. The result of this research is often summarized as the 80/20 rule - that about 20 percent of a computer's instructions do about 80 percent of the work. The aim of the RISC design is to optimize a computer's performance for that 20 percent of the instructions, speeding up the execution as much as possible. The remaining 80 percent of the commands could be duplicated, when necessary, by combinations of the quick 20 percent.

Analysis, and practical experience, has shown that the 20 percent could be made so much faster that the overhead required to emulate the remaining 80 percent were no hindrance at all. Consequently, RISC designs have won great favour for new, high-speed microprocessor designs.

No sharp line demarcates the boundaries of complexity in chip design and the reduction in complexity possible with RISC designs. For example, an acknowledged RISC microprocessor like the M2000 made by MIPS Technologies has a full repertoire of 115 instructions. Intel's 386, a CISC microprocessor, features about 144 instructions (depending on how you count). Although significant, the difference between the two is not necessarily of vital importance.

More important than the number of instructions that a computer or microprocessor understands is how those instructions are realized. Slimming down a computer's instruction set is just one way that engineers go about streamlining its processing. As the instructions are reduced, all the other ragged edges that interfere with its performance are trimmed off, and all that remains is honed and smoothed to offer the least possible resistance to the passage of data.

One of the most important distinguishing characteristics of the RISC philosophy is the elimination of microcode. Microcode, a programming language generally used for controlling chips, is not necessary for a microprocessor to operate. Instructions can be hardwired into the design of a chip so that an instruction bit pattern directly causes the desired function. The result is that instructions can be executed at higher speeds. On the downside, the complexity of a hardwired microprocessor increases dramatically with every additional instruction. Practical designs are best made with small instruction. Other key elements in RISC technology are an emphasis on speeding up the instructions most used by the computer, and a tighter bonding of machine and optimizing compiler (computer language) design. RISC designs exploit fast memory techniques like caching and pipelining. The RISC instructions themselves are focused - each is designed to do only one thing. And the instructions are made more uniform so that all are the same size and handle operands similarly.



Apple PowerPC using the too boo service processer.

PowerPC 601

The PowerPC 601 microprocessor is used in the PowerPC Mac range of computers. The fact that it is being sold in large numbers means that it can be manufactured more and more cheaply. Also by the computers that use it being sold in substantial quantities to the general public it has raised the expectations of the whole computer market and encouraged the development of more low-price RISC technology.

The PowerPC 601 is a highly integrated single-chip processor that combines a powerful RISC architecture, a

superscalar machine organization, and a versatile high-performance bus interface.

The processor contains a 32KB unified cache and can dispatch, execute, and complete up to three instructions per cycle. The bus interface configurations provide a wide range of system bus interfaces, including pipelined. Where instructions are feed along directed lines to the register stacks non-pipelined or non-directed lines, and split transactions. Where inst-ructions can take ether path depending on which path has less load. The result is a cost effective, general purpose microprocessor that offers very competitive performance.

The 601 microprocessor is the first of a family of devices which IBM and Motorola jointly developed in Austin, Texas. And discussions have taken place that may lead to its use on forthcoming Amigas.

IBM and Motorola are already well on the way to providing a wide range of processor designs using the PowerPC architecture. The PowerPC 601 Microprocessor is the first member of a family of PowerPC processors.

The implementation uses state of the art CMOS technology to achieve an extremely compact single-chip design. The superscalar machine organization, large internal cache, and versatile bus interface provide competitive performance at a low cost.

R10000 Microprocessor

MIPS Technologies and two semiconductor partners, NEC Electronics and Toshiba America Electronics Components, have produced the MIPS RISC microprocessor MIPS R10000.

This single-chip superscalar 64-bit microprocessor features numerous innovations including the new MIPS ANDES architecture (Architecture with Non-Sequential Dynamic Execution Scheduling) and MIPS Avalanche bus to optimize the R10000 microprocessor's performance on real applications. The R10000 microprocessor runs both Windows NT and UNIX operating systems.

It's designed for a broad spectrum of computing needs, spanning from PCs and workstations to servers and supercomputers.

R10000 microprocessor is designed for symmetric multiprocessing, so up to several hundred chips can be closely coupled in a computer to offer superior performance on applications traditionally solved by large, expensive mainframe and super computers.

AMD

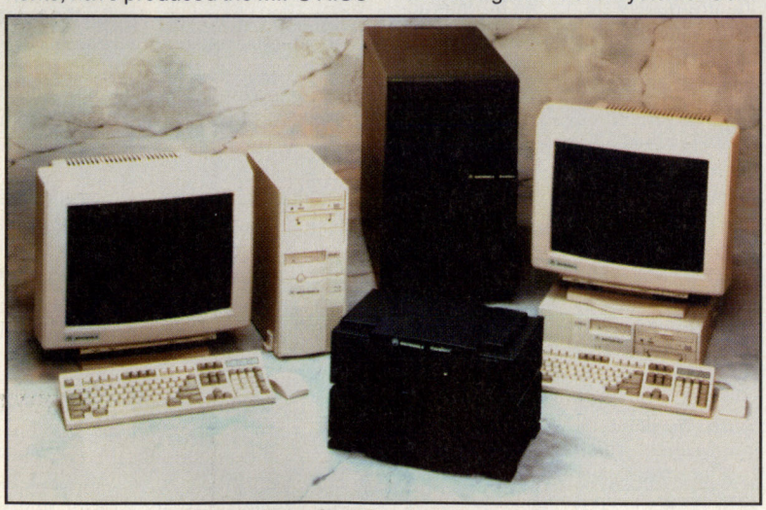
Advanced Micro Devices(AMD) is the world's second-largest producer of Windows compatible microprocessors, ater Intel, and is now, following Intel's virtual pull out from that market, of the world's leading supplier of 386 chips.



The AMD 29k processor.

AMD's microprocessor range also includes the Am-486 microprocessor family, introduced early in 1993.

AMD brought out its 29K family of microprocessors in 1988. This marked AMD's entry into RISC microprocessor market. This RISC range is the basis for more than 475 embedded and distributed processing designs for products ranging from laser printers to aircraft flight controller systems. Companies that use the 29K family include Apple, Boeing, Bull, Hewlett-Packard, Lexmark, Samsung, Siemens, Toshiba and Xerox.

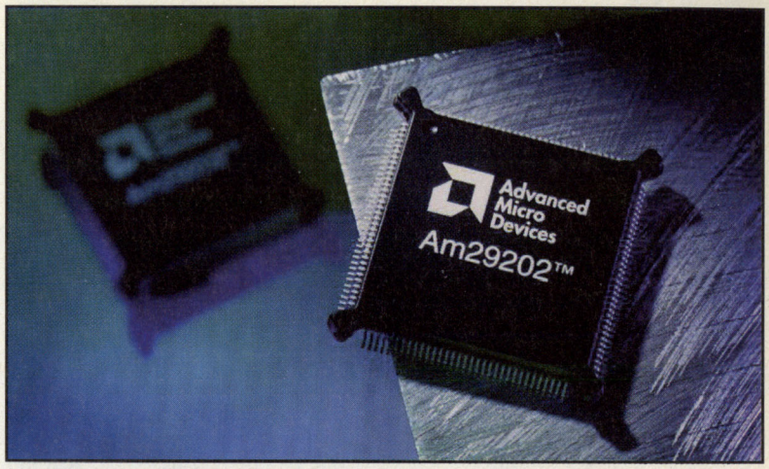


Metorola also produce PC's using their own processors.

Hewlett Packard

In addition to buying in RISC chips from AMD, Hewlett Packard, the world's second biggest computer company, also makes its own. The 7200 is the ninth PA-RISC processor designed by HP; the 7200 adds several unusual RISC features. The chip connects directly to a new 768-Mbyte/s system bus that can connect up to four 7200 chips along with system memory and I/O. Like the PA-7100LC, the 7200 adds a second integer ALU to increase throughput on integer applications. While retaining the off-chip primary caches of previous HP processors, the new design uses prefetching and a small on-chip "assist" cache to improve memory performance. It also adds bi-endian support. The 7200 is manufactured in a new 0.55-micron CMOS process, allowing clock speeds of up to 140 MHz.

As with its previous processors, HP has no plans to market the PA-7200 to other organisations preferring to use all its RISC chips for its own machines. With a turnover now topping £18 billion Hewlett Packard must be doing something right!



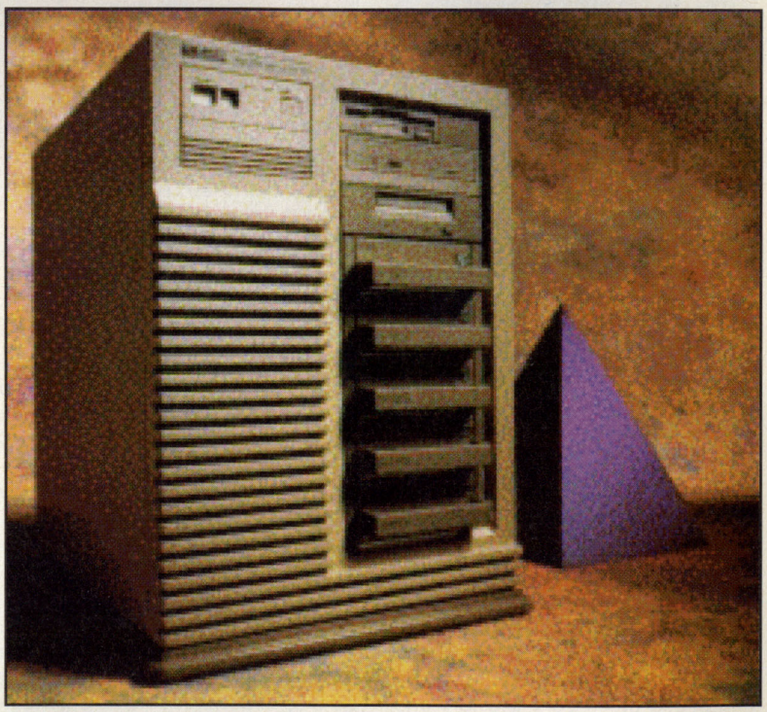
AMD is the leading compatible competitor of Intel for PC chips.

Future in Business

The ARM7 family is the latest RISC architecture from Advanced RISC Machines Ltd (ARM, a sister company to Acorn, the manufacturer of the BBC and the Archimedes computers). It offers significant technological advances in microprocessor design. The architecture has been designed to further extend what ARM calls "the world's leading low power high performance RISC processor for emerging portable and consumer products."

The Arm microprocessor is said to offer several innovative hardware ideas which include fast multiply performance and innovative embedded ICE support plus high performance RISC core low voltage operation - 3V/5V compact design and worlds' smallest RISC DSP extensions all intended to increase performance.

Building upon the foundation of



Hewlett Packard, one of the founders of computing, still a leading contender to supply Amiga RISC chips.

CHIPS AWAY! Part 2

CONTINUED

the successful ARM6 family.

The ARM7 architecture is now claimed to be the most powerful low voltage RISC processor on the market.

Apple is among those expected to use it in future generations of hand held PDAs.

The ARM7 processor core will use half the power of the existing ARM6, and will be around half the die size. In a full processor design it should provide 50 to 100% more performance, according to Robin Saxby, ARM's MD.

He said the ARM6 core in 5V 1um CMOS used 33,500 transistors in 11.1 sq mm. Shrinking it to 5V 0.8um CMOS reduced the area to 5.4 sq mm, and cut power by 20%. ARM added 2000 transistors to the core to stabilise 3.3V operation, increasing its area to 5.9 sq mm.

"We have to keep pushing performance up and power consumption down," Saxby continued. "Making the right trade-offs is our skill."

Saxby is beginning a concerted move into the Japanese market by opening a sales and support office there.

The ARM story looks like a success, unusual these days, for a UK-based chip operation. Let's hope it won't go the way of INMOS, the brilliantly innovative company that invented the transputer and then was

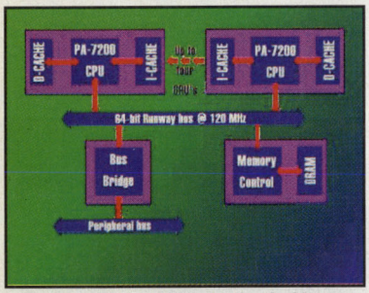


Figure 1 - The PA-7200 contains dual integer units and a small assist cache but no other on-chip caches.

sold off by the government before it could make a profit and now, owned by other European countries is not even in the UK.

The Future in Games

The future use of the next-generation-RISC technology will put the microprocessors into both the business and entertainment worlds. The future of entertainment will use chips like 3DO's M2 64-bit architecture. There will be a quantum leap - no, not the Sinclair computer which was first British-made 16 bit computer - in advanced CD entertainment technology. 3DO's high-end 3-D image and sound processors and IBM and Motorola's PowerPC microprocessor are likely to lead the field. M2 technology is being boosted as rivalling the image quality and performance of workstations and the most popular arcade machines. "It's a quantum leap for the industry in both graphics speed and quality," Trip Hawkins, 3DO's told ***AUI*** "We're raising the bar again."

M2 Performance

3DO designed the M2 architecture 'to deliver breakthrough processing performance and the highest quality graphics and digital video for consumer interactive entertainment software. "The M2 polygon performance alone is phenomenal," Hugh Martin, 3DO's Chief Operating officer told ***AUI*** that "M2 easily beats many expensive graphics workstations and outpaces popular coin-op arcade systems." With its advanced graphics, video, and sound capabilities, M2's powerful 64-bit architecture should give software developers the power to create games that with a new level of realism and involving experiences not previously available on advanced CD entertainment systems."

Based on 120 revolutionary custom graphics, sound, and other processors designed by 3DO, and an IBM PowerPC 602 microprocessor specially created with 3DO interactive applications in mind, the M2 architecture is said to process more than one million polygons per second. Each of the multiple M2 processors is dedicated to specific tasks to optimise superior image quality and performance.

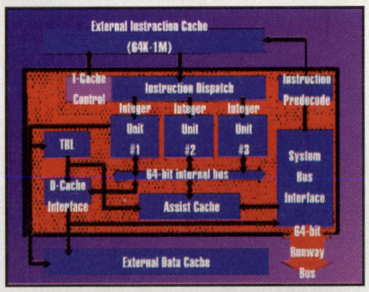


Figure 2 shows how a low-cost multiprocessor system could be built using the 7200. Each processor module contains a single 7200 chip and cache memory; no additional interface chips are needed to connect multiple processors. HP estimates that the bandwidth is sufficient for up to four 7200 processors without significant degradation.

These processors are supported by the powerful system resources so that M2 technology can deliver 528 megabytes per second.

MPEG-1 digital video decompression is also designed into the M2 for built-in VHS quality digital video capability.

Next Generation

"The superior price and performance of the PowerPC 602 is enabling new classes of advanced home entertainment software," Phil Hester, General Manager, Systems Technology and Architecture Division, IBM told us. "Working with 3DO, we've defined the 602 with unique capabilities to make M2 the best possible technology for interactive entertainment applications. 3DO's 64-bit M2 system architecture will forever change the way people play, learn, and interact. The highly integrated M2 architecture was developed from the ground up and is the result of working with the world's leading processor, graphics, and audio system designers."



3DO, Amiga ideas leading into hot RISC technology.

"IBM and Motorola's world class manufacturing process will allow us to achieve superior performance through higher integration," said Hawkins. "With the PowerPC microprocessor and 3DO's custom M2 processors, we have a processor family that offers truly next-generation performance."

Beyond the Bits

M2's revolutionary image quality and performance features is claimed to enable development of interactive entertainment software that provides an unprecedented level of realism, with richly detailed interactive worlds containing multiple, complex 3-D characters. With photo-realistic images, high frame rates, VHS-quality video and theatre-quality sound, the M2 interactive software experience is being designed to be radically better than anything consumers are familiar with today.

"The M2 capabilities demonstrated today go far beyond anything currently available on the market or in development for the advanced CD entertainment market," said Martin. "Features like Gouraud shading, filtered textures, 3-D perspective correction, and complex scenes requiring performance in the hundreds of thousands of polygons per second, will take gamers into a new dimension of realism and fun."

"With the first 3DO system, we delivered the very best interactive entertainment experience for the home," added Hawkins. "M2 will again set the standard - this time for the 64-bit advanced CD entertainment experience."

It's ironic that 3DO is headed by Trip Hawkins, who founded Electronic Arts, and has RJ Mical and Dale Luck, both of whom worked on the original design for the Amiga as leading developers on the staff. These are people who believed in the Amiga and had the proper development for the Amiga taken place, it might have been Commodore not 3DO that was at the forefront of the next generation technology.

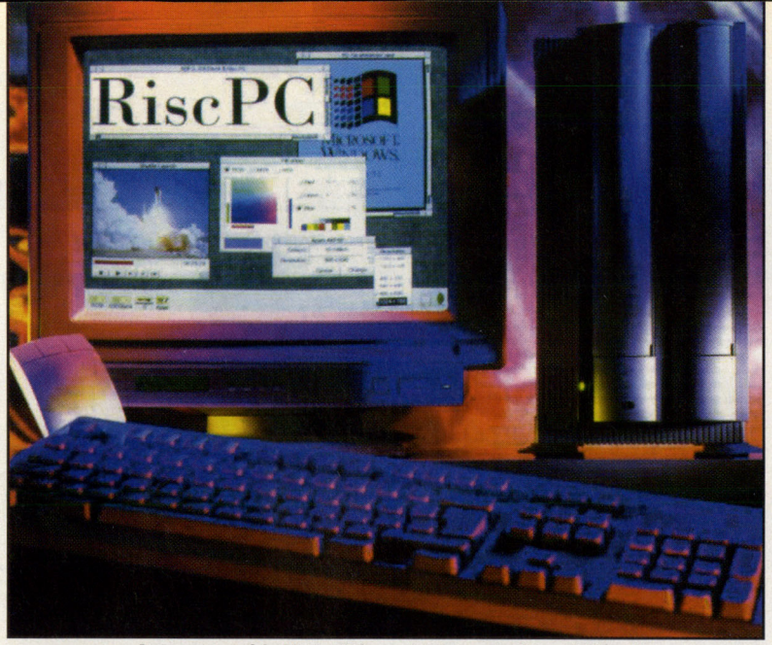
Not Taking a RISC?

The biggest mystery is why the company that dominates the world of the microprocessor does not, at present, seem to be competing with the others who are developing RISC-based chips. Intel, who supply 90% of the microprocessors that power the world's burgeoning market in PCs are still committed, it seems, to CISC technology. They have recently announced the launch of the P6, the follow up to the Pentium, with, as we reported in the first part of Chips Away!, some 5.5 million transistors buried in this tiny lump of silicon.

Yet the P6, brilliant though its development and innovative nature may well be, is still based on the present generation technology. Why? You would surely think that Intel with its huge resources and market share would go for the most advanced technology available. They have forecast that before the end of the century they will be selling more than 100,000,000 a year but they don't seem to believe that these chips need to be RISC-based.

One reason, apart from the old business rule that if you have a good formula for success don't change unless you have to, is that their close association with MicroSoft and its Windows operating system means that millions of computer users, with corporate and private, already possess and are likely to want to go on using software that might well not be compatible with any changed chip architecture. And Intel have now the advantage of setting the standards for others rather than letting others compete at an equal level.

It might be said that Apple faced the same problem when they migrated to RISC technology with their PowerMacs. But companies that depend on their computers in such areas as DTP where Macs dominate have little option but to get the latest compatible software to provide the



Acorn, successful with the BBC, now trying to make it in a RISC world.

results they need. While it is useful to have extra speed for business applications such as spreadsheets, databases and the like, it is not vital for few demands are made when text or number-crunching is what the computer is being is used for where is graphical applications specialised workstations or high end PCs are really used to their limits.

Perhaps Intel have looked at what has happened with the Pentium. The P5 came along with much Intel publicity but the majority of businesses, who make up the backbone of the desktop PC business which is Intel's market, haven't really taken to it in big numbers yet. Many have been quite content with the speed and power provide by the now much lower price 486. That may be why Intel is saying it intends to sell 486 chips at the same price as Pentiums shortly. And another fundamental reason why businesses have been slower than Intel would have wanted in taking up the Pentium was that so little software really needed the Pentium mostly the 486 is good enough.

For the last couple of years, Intel have dominated the computing microprocessor field as Microsoft have captured the software scene. They both still look almost invulnerable. Almost. For not so long ago, IBM had the same appearance of effortless superiority. It came suddenly, more suddenly than anyone would have predicted to an end.

Intel might be right about not changing a successful formula but there are those who believe that unless Intel takes the lead in the next generation of chips as they did in the present they might find that they are not so invulnerable after all. Sometimes, as they say, taking a risk is the only safe thing to do.

It could be that it is true.

The Future in Graphics?

A couple of years ago, ***AUI*** carried a news item about the Alpha chip which had been developed by DEC, who once big in mini-computers such as the famed PDP 11, had been the second largest computer company in the world before they took a fall brought about by the growth in power and popularity of the desktop PC. Virtually no other computer magazine, and especially not the Amiga publications thought the news worth comment.

The Alpha chip, ***AUI*** reported,was set to be the fastest microprocessor ever invented. And so it has turned out to be. So powerful has it become, with speeds of up to 150 MIPS reported that high end Amiga suppliers such as PremierVision are turning to them for graphics customers not just because they can't get any Amigas but due to the sheer speed the Alpha chips give to such time-consuming tasks as rendering.

The DEC 3000 Model 800 AXP workstation is the top of Digital's Alpha AXP workstation family. The DEC 3000 Model 800 AXP workstation microprocessor is a DECchip 21064 200-MHZ CPU -yes, 2 00MHZ - with 2Mbyte secondary cache and it has 64-bit architecture. It also supports 100-Mbyte/second I/O and graphics expansion slots, internal disk storage capacity of over 8 Gbytes and a mere 1 Gbyte of memory.

Processors of this power are used in image processing by technical and scientific professionals working in mechanical design and analysis, molecular simulation, medical imaging, remote sensing, computational fluid dynamics, scientific visualization.

The Model 800 suits the needs of technical users who need very fast graphics and CPU power for mechanical CAD, scientific analysis, data reduction/display, medical imaging, scientific modelling and animation/visualization. And commercial users who require large database retrieval such as financial analysis, insurance processing, network management and stock/options analysis.

DEC processors have been used for a number of purposes by Premier Vision. They have produced a machine affectionately call the Warthog they have modified DEC Alpha giving it a 275Mz processor which has 128-bit architecture. This, they told ***AUI***, makes the Warthog 30 times faster than a Pentium 100Mz. The Warthog is primarily used as a rendering machine and costs slightly more than an Amiga - a cool £7,500. But they are so popular that Premier Vision sell three or four a week and could sell more if they could get them.

Bugged About

We all thought that computers and the microprocessors that went in them were foolproof but as they become more complex it is easier for the dreaded bugs to creep in. The Intel Pentium P5 recently fell foul of one of these dreaded problems. The bug was in the floating point unit and guess who were among the first people to find it? Yes, you're right the scientists! Scientists working on P5 based machines were suddenly getting their sums wrong, though only in calculations that were going to 14 places or so. Intel moved very quickly to correct this bug and all Pentiums now being produced have this problem corrected. However, Intel is thought to have had to set aside a cool £200 million to cover the possible costs. An expensive little bug!

Hewlett-Packard has also been bugged - or should it be buggered? - recently. A bug affected microprocessors used in some of its high-end workstations and servers. Up to 20,000 were found to have problems. The bug seemed to cause the computers to crash and in some circumstances corrupt data. Hewlett-Packard was quick to correct the fault.

Though these bugs may shake our confidence in the new generation micro-processors, they are the exception not the rule. As they say on TV don't have nightmares about these little creatures affecting your life. In each of the above cases (and I am sure it will be true in the future) the companies reacted very quickly. They need to keep their reputation clean and get the problem behind them as soon as possible. Any potential problem has the potential of costing them their business, so they are going to make every effort necessary to put any problems right in the shortest possible time. Just think what it could cost them if they started to get sued for say, the life-threatening errors that could be caused by a bug in a medical computer or in a computerised transport system such as London Transport Underground. Get a bug into a system like that and someone would really be down the tubes!

The Amiga's Future at RISC?

The Amiga's developers will have to look closely at the new era of microprocessors we have discussed in this Special Report. The Amiga has in the past used the same line of Motorola chips as Apple Macs. To compete with the PC threat, the Mac system was successfully ported across to Power PC chips. The Amiga is being forecast to take the same path, becoming PC compatible by running its system on the new generation RISC-based microprocessors. The highly favoured candidate for such a move is the Motorola / IBM Power PC 602, though HP are also a possible.

The new Amiga system could run via switchable ROM chips, alternating between the two operating systems. Alternatively, while developing an eventually open-ended system that automatically recognises and runs PC software, the new Amigas could use a "Soft Windows" process similar to the current Power PC Macs.

With the recognised advantages of the Amiga boosted by the ability to run Windows NT and PowerMac software, the Amiga could be back again as a real contender for the higher end market. Whether ESCOM can or would wish to provide the backing necessary to catch up with 3DO or the coming 64bit machines from Sony, Nintendo and Sega for the mass low price market is another matter altogether. But one thing is certain that unless the Amiga is able to compete with these hot RISC machines then it has little future. Because RISC technology is where the future of computing lies.

Commodore in its heyday was always at the forefront of home computers. That's why Commodore machines were the machines of choice with business community using the Commodore PET, the games' users using 500 Amiga and professional video studios is using the 4000.

The ideal route for the Amiga in the future would to follow in the proven foot steps of the Acorn RISC PC. The RISC PC as well as being backwards compatible with existing Acorn software is also compatible with the PC, via an add-on processor.

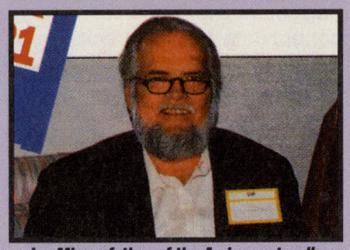
The Amiga of the future should also be based on RISC technology perhaps using a Power PC microprocessor such as the PC 602 or the M2 chip used by the 3DO system. Ideally this future Amiga should be able to run in four modes Amiga, Macintosh, PC and 3DO. This would make it the most versatile personal computer ever made, it would be the ultimate business computer and a mega games machine. Dream on? ***AUI***

Michael Rumbelow test drives a clutch of videos that run from telling the old jokes about the Amiga to showing you how to deal with your machine of it needs some troubleshooting.

Showing It Like It Is

The History of the Amiga

The History of the Amiga' has been covered recently in ***AUI*** in which some may well claim is as near as the authoritative version as you could get. As the longest established Amiga magazine in the world now, we should know what there is to know if anyone does. However, real live stuff, hearing the people who made that history can come as a refreshing tonic after the recent trials and tribulations that almost cost Commodore and the Amiga their existence.



Jay Miner, father of the Amiga, naturally featured in the Video "History of the Amiga"

A couple of years ago some Amiga fans working with a US video company managed to persuade the original team who created the Amiga so long ago in '83-'84 to come together and give their personal accounts of how the Amiga was created. All the legendary names are here: Carl Sassenrath, the multi-tasking genius, Dale Luck, the graphics wiz, RJ Mical, the innovative software magician, and, of course, the late Jay Miner, the "Father of the Amiga". With many others, they sat around cracking jokes and telling anecdotes about the old days. And between them all laughing at their own jokes and each others' it makes a jolly and highly entertaining video - an interesting contrast to the "Deathbed Vigil" video reviewed in ***AUI*** July.

If you haven't seen the people involved before, apart from the presidential figure of Jay Miner, they make a motley assortment of amiable West Coast geeks and freaks. From the keen fresh-faced Carl Sassenrath who looks as if he doesn't need a razor, to laid-back mountain man Dale Luck with a beard so thick he looks like he might not survive a shave, to RJ Mical with his big, droopy Stalinesque 'tache, you get the sense that this was not a run-of-the-mill company.

Dale Luck recounts thinking as much when, somewhat worse for wear after a day at a local beer festival, it dawned on him that his interview appointment with Amiga had been that day. On phoning up he was told that there was no problem, that he could drop round for an interview when he felt like it. He was suitably impressed with the company's outlook and went on to become responsible for some of the Amiga's ground-breaking graphics features and in particular the famous 'bouncing ball' demo.

The whole history of the Amiga's creation is here, all in the words of the original team, illustrated with pictures and footage from the early days. From Jay Miner's original vision of a low-cost home computer which could also play games and the formation of a joystick company as a cover for their activities, to the desperate search for a backer for the wonder-machine in '84, and ultimately the nick-of-time deal with Commodore. All of this is embroidered with anecdotes like how Jay Miner's dog Mitch was responsible for the chip design, the origin of the 'guru meditation' message, how they kept the breadboard version of the Amiga from falling apart etc.

Conclusion

For anyone with a soft spot for the Amiga - and if you don't what are you doing reading ***AUI***? -this video makes a very entertaining, illuminating and sentimental hour's viewing. It captures a sense of the weird alchemical fizz of dreams becoming real for the original Amiga team. OK, so they all hoped the Amiga would make them millionaires and it didn't, they were envisioning $50 a share and Commodore eventually paid $4, but which would you rather - to have created a machine as elegant and ahead-of-its-time as the Amiga, or to be sitting on Bill Gates's corporate billions? Erm...on second thoughts actually perhaps it's better not to answer that. ***AUI***

RATING 90%

INFO

Price: £8.99

Amiga World Animation Video Vol. 1 & 2

In the late eighties, when most PC owners were still dreaming of one day owning a mouse, and computer animation was generally thought to be something costing millions of pounds which only top film studios could afford, an underground elite of Amiga owners were already crafting their own animations at home with tools like DPaint and Imagine. Unfortunately, apart from their long-suffering neighbours and friends there was no audience to appreciate these home-made masterpieces. Until in 1990 the main Amiga magazine in America, Amiga World, decided to run a competition inviting Amiga animators to send in their work. They selected the best animations and the result was two commercially released videos: Amiga World Animation Vols 1 and 2. These are an excellent historical record of early (albeit all US) Amiga animation which might otherwise have been lost to posterity.

The animations, which last from a few seconds to several minutes each, range from traditional Tom and Jerry style action cartoons, to high definition Imagine workouts, short visual jokes and abstract shifting coloured patterns. Many have that intense, slightly unbalanced edge that comes from daubing images from the dank dungeons of your unconscious mind directly onto screen with no commercial considerations or external censorship.

A few could do with some wholesale editing or otherwise somehow don't quite work; understandable given that people were often trying to do - single-handed and at home - animations which until the Amiga came along would have taken studios full of equipment and professional animators. But there are nevertheless some brilliant animations here which would almost certainly never have been made if it hadn't been for the Amiga.

Volume 1, 48 minutes, is for some reason only about half the length of Volume 2. There are some entertaining animations in the first volume, in

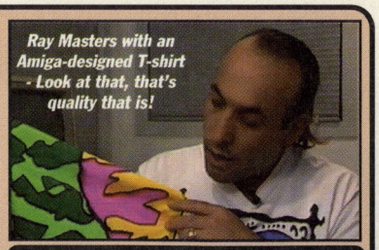


Late eighties abstract animation from the primitive soup - 'Treesnake'

Amiga Graphics

This hour and a half general tutorial on Amiga graphics is disappointingly poor given some of the good Amiga videos the US Razza company have made. Apart from seeming rather dated now - it was made in 1990 - the video comes across as unstructured and meandering, making it difficult to follow and digest. For instance, it spends ages on the hardly very advanced concept of screen resolution, and skips over important tools in DPaint without actually explaining how they can be used. The only good bit for me was the cameo from British graphics wiz Ray Masters who works in the US, and seems to be the Amiga-artist-in-residence in Razza graphics videos. He takes you through how he designs a T-shirt in DPaint, then converts it for four-colour printing direct to T-shirts.

Amiga graphics is a big subject, hard to encompass in one video. This video touches on many areas, from fonts to digitising, but the overall effect is as confusing as it is clarifying. ***AUI***

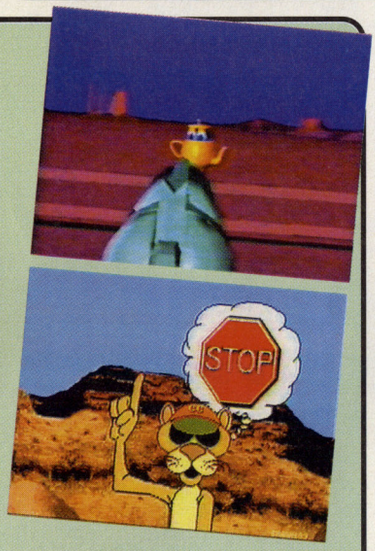


Ray Masters with an Amiga-designed T-shirt - Look at that, that's quality that is!

RATING 56%

INFO

Price: £10.99



particular Mandrill Maze by Sue Tremblay and Nick Didkowsky, but for my money Volume 2, at 90 minutes has more interesting animations.

Some personal favourites were 'Gumbo' by Tracy Sabin, the classic 'Pot Shots' by Pixel Kitchen - the one where the terrified teapot unrenders itself temporarily to avoid being shot by a sinister gun-slinging Mickey Mouse , the weirdly atmospheric 'Acolytes' by Bob White and the colourful 'Distant Star' by Shamus Morlier.

Conclusion

For people interested in animation this is a fine, comprehensive collection of early American Amiga animation work. Made, thankfully in my opinion, before people started becoming obsessed with VistaPro flights and high-quality rendered spaceship battles. It's an interesting showcase of some of the imaginative nuggets people were already mining with their Amigas in the early years. ***AUI***

RATING 76%

INFO

Price: Vol. 1 £10.99
Vol 2. £14.99

Amiga Service and Repair Video

Ever felt helpless when your screen goes green and your Amiga starts making a loud grating noise, as if it's choking to death? In this video experienced Amiga engineers take you through the way to perform first-aid and basic surgery on your afflicted Amiga 500 or 2000.

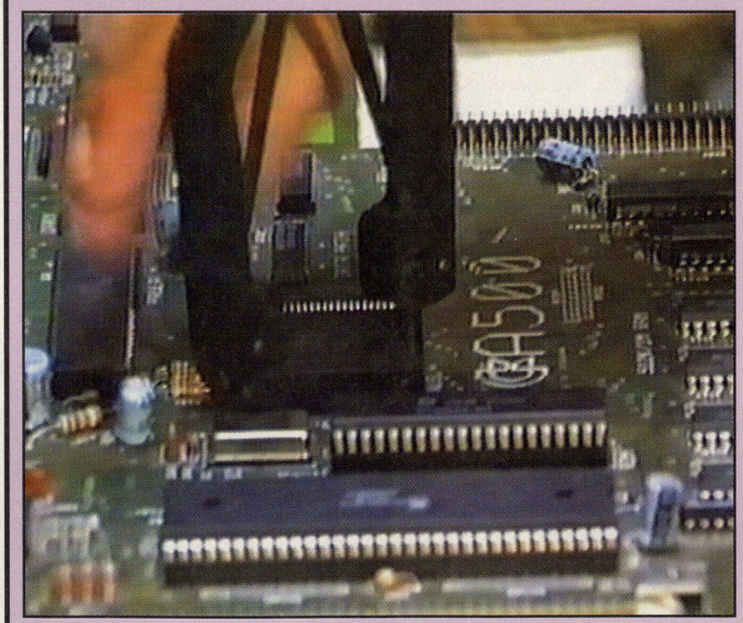
The hour-long video is divided into five parts: Taking it Apart, the Mouse, Disk Drives, Chips and Trouble Shooting. As is pointed out in the video, most failures in the Amiga are failures of socketed IC chips, and the video shows you clearly and practically how to go about taking the casing off, testing the individual chips and replacing any faulty parts. The workings and quirks of disk drives are likewise demystified in an unassuming, step by step manner.

Apart from enabling you to fix certain problems you might have with your Amiga, this video also gives a good insight into how the machine works on a nuts and bolts level for anyone who has never dared lift off the casing of their Amiga to peer inside. The American Amiga expert who narrates is obviously camera shy - you only ever get to see his hands, working away on the chip-board. And the production is amateurish - for instance the titles insist on spelling 'Paula' as 'Palua', despite the fact that the name is written clearly on the chip. But overall this is a practical, easy-to-follow and charming introduction to the electronic dimension of the Amiga and a useful video to have at hand if and when your Amiga 500 or 2000 ever does start acting up. If only it could be updated to cover the 1200 and higher Amigas it could help save the sanity, money and tears of many more Amiga owners. ***AUI***

RATING 72%

INFO

Price: £10.99



Performing open-heart surgery on the Amiga]

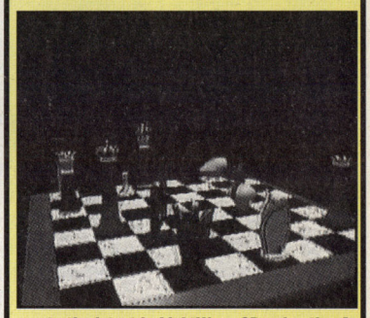
How To Animate

'How To Animate', on the other hand, in a brilliant video introduction to animating on the Amiga. In just under an hour, it takes you from the photographic studies of movement by Edward Muybridge in the last century, through one of the first ever proper film animations, by Emile Cohl in 1907, to 2-D Amiga animation using DPaint and other packages and the first 3-D raytraced Amiga animations, to a triumphant three minute tutorial in LightWave as a finale.



From the first ever cartoon...

For anyone with a beginner's interest in animating on the Amiga, this video would provide an excellent grounding. And even for seasoned animators it should be an instructive pleasure to watch. ***AUI***



...to the latest in LightWave 3D animation.]

RATING 89%

INFO

Price: £10.99

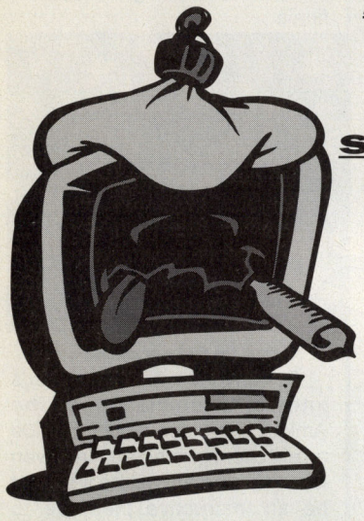
INFO

Contact:
DTBS
18 Norwich Avenue
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The Amiga Answer Machine...

Andy Eskelson, Guru of the mysteries of the Amiga, answers your queries and solves your Amiga problems.



Answer Types

APPS	Programs etc]
VIDEO	Video related problems
COMMS	Communications
PROG	Programming
OS	Operating System
PRINT	Printer Problems
COVERDISK	Cover Disk problems
OTHER	For Anything Else

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
Could you please tell me how I go about making a picture file executable, so it boots without a paint package? Would you also tell me why I get waiting for disk activity to finish on some programs I run? My set up consists of a A1200 with 210 Hard drive, 4 megs FAST RAM (Amitek Board), external drive, Panasonic printer.

One other question, I bought a copy of Theme Park, and in the instructions it says to remove the setpatch command if it doesn't work properly at first. I did this and I am still having problems running it from my hard drive. The game either crashes or when writing to my hard drive it causes read/write error. This makes my volume (DH0:) unreadable. Please help on this if possible as I would love to be able to play this game on my hard drive.

Simon Linton
Walsall

Dear Simon,
You can't make a picture file executable, by definition it is not a program, and cannot be executed. There are ways around this problem. What you need is a viewer program. There are several, Display, Show, also on the latest Coverdisks you will find a utility called C-Over. What you have to do is find a viewer program that suits your needs, and put it somewhere on the disk. When you save the graphics file, make sure that you save it with an Icon. Open up the icon by using the information option from the Workbench Icons menu. Change the default tooltype to the name of your viewer program. That's all there is to it.

I assume that you are talking about system guru messages, i.e. a red or yellow flashing box. This is a system crash, and could be caused by all sorts of things. You might have power supply problems, dud memory, incompatible programs or anything in fact.

Theme Park, well, I would normally say that you should never remove setpatch, it is there to fix various bugs in the system. Games programs are a law unto themselves, you will have to take this up with the manufacturer.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
Since we bought our first Amiga 600 2 years ago I have spent a lot of time both reading articles and experimenting with Wordworth V.1 and various text editors trying to get compatibility with Word Perfect 5.1 on the PC at work, mainly to enable me to take advantage of the HP Laserjet 3 . We now have a 1200 with hard drive and 6mb of ram and Power XL high density drive, Acorn AKF30 monitor and recently updated to Wordworth 3.1, but still I had to mess wound with tabs etc., and only text Was interchangeable. We also bought our own printer, Deskjet 520 excellent, but it still bugged me that their had to be a way to Use the Laserjet if needed without a lot of messing wound. I knew about CMD (Change Main Device) a little but useful program that runs in the background when activated but had never gone too deeply into it as I thought it was just for use between two Amigas.

Not so, to use CMD just double click on its icon and a widow appears for a few seconds telling you that CMD is installed. Nothing else appears to happen until you send a document or picture etc. to the printer. CMD then intercepts the document and redirects it to a file on disk ready to be taken to another Amiga or PC with a printer.

If it's a PC make sure the disk is formatted as MSDOS (click on the PC0??? Icon to format the disk). Another point to ensure is to make sure that the target printer is selected in Printer Prefs on your Workbench disk or in the Program preferences (i.e., Wordworth etc.). Another thing to set up is the tool types in CMD's information window. I have these set to:

DEVICE = parallel
FILE=PC1:filename (anything you choose)
SKIP= TRUE
MULTIPLE = TRUE
NOTIFY = TRUE

Now double click on CMD icon and send your file to printer and it's intercepted and sent to disk. Take the disk to work or to the PC with the printer and go into DOS and type A: (return) and at the prompt A:\>type "copy /b {filename} lpt1" and your document etc. will be printed with no problems.

The switch /b is essential as it tells MSDOS that the file is encrypted. Within the file name include the extension .1 (dot 1) as CMD puts this on the end of the file for the first file and .2 ,.3 for any subsequent files. Picture files can be printed the same way. LPT1 is the printer port but depending if other printers we attached then it could be LPT2 or 3, just change it to suit. Hope this info. helps other folk who have had the same problems I had.

Pete Fox
Doncaster

Dear Pete,
Thanks for the information. I find very few problems transferring text between WP5.1 and the Amiga, Some things don't work, but I just avoid using them until the finial draft is required. Same with tabs, I know that If I use tabs set every half inch then I just default both WP programs to use the same size.

A couple of tips.

Format the disk on the PC. The PC is sometimes a little fussy about its disk format.

Remember that in order to use 1.44Mb PC disks you need a high density drive attached to the Amiga. The PC can format and read 720K disks as well, just as can any Amiga.

The /b switch is nothing to do with encryption at all. There are two modes of operation on the PC, the first is ASCII text, this is happy with any value from 1-127, the upper numbers from 128-255 are filtered out. This is

no good if you are using the full range 8 bits. The /b switch simply means treat as a binary file. This passes all 8 bits to the device in question.

It is very easy to fill up disks with graphics, especially when using oddball fonts. Remember that the archiving program ZIP is available for the PC and the Amiga, so you can archive your print dump, thus squeezing more onto the disk.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*

After months of indecision, I finally made the leap into "hard-disk land" hoping to be rid of "disk-swapping wrist", and all other handicaps associated with a floppy based system. My set-up consists of a CD32, Rev 2.0 SX-1 with a 4Mb Simm and the cause of the problem - an A real. (who?), 2.5" 260Mb hard drive. All kinds of weird things are happening but the main culprit seems to be the boot priority settings.

It prepped, formatted and installed OK with the supplied SX-1 disk. DF0 has a priority of 5, DH0 4, CC0 3, with DH1 not bootable. With no CD or floppy inserted, instead of the hard drive booting, I get the CD32 logo which usually freezes in mid-flight. Disabling DF0 and CC0, leaving DH0 enabled, again results in the frozen logo.

Everything works as usual when booting from floppy and I then have access to the hard drive. Now it starts getting weird, DH0 will boot up but ONLY if a CD is in the drive. Not just any old CD but specifically Amiga CD32 Gamer Volume 9!.

I've tried other CD's including your own but they load as normal. Somehow that CD keeps spinning but won't boot but it allows the hard drive to boot. When Workbench has loaded and I click on say... the Prefs drawer, it usually freezes and I've left it for over 30 minutes and the system is still frozen. Now repeat the above from floppy and again everything works as normal. If I lift the CD lid to change the afore mentioned CD, the system resets.

I've discounted the lack of power suggestion, as I've disconnected the floppy and the problem still persists. The cause is probably something really silly I've overlooked but it's got me scratching my head! Right now, the CD32 is banished to its box and I'm using my dependable Rev 5 1Mb A500 which was enjoying retirement on a beach somewhere in Australia.

Where can I get a replacement *AUI* CD No3, as my copy crashes after the "buzzer".? It's probably scratched and I think I know why. If the CDs came in proper sturdy Jewel cases rather than cheapo flexible wallets, they'd survive longer. After all, you work hard to produce professional discs but you "spoil the ship for a ha'penny worth o'tar" The extra pennies on the cover price would be worth paying.

Chris Miller

Dear Chris,

The floppy should have the highest boot priority so that is correct. However, maybe a little more help is needed. Up the boot priority on the floppy to 10, and DH0: to 8 that MIGHT help. It could be a power problem, disconnecting the floppy would only indicate a power problem if the system was right on the edge of working. If you are feeling brave, you could try removing your RAM module, as that will take quite a bit of power. The real answer is to try a bigger power unit.

I'll get the Coverdisk geniuses to dump a copy of the Office CD32 SX1 boot priority and startup sequence just so that you can compare them here.

DF0 - Priority 5 ADOS trackdisk 0
CC0 - Priority 3 ADOS carddisk 0
CDH0 - Priority 0 ADOS scsi 0
CDH1 - Not Boootable scsi 0

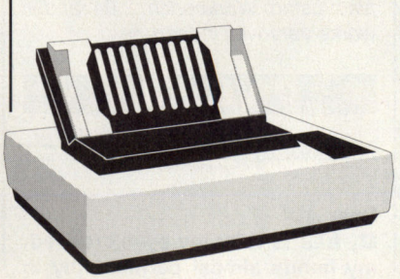
*Call the **AUI** office for availability on CDs. The Cheapo flexible wallets offer BETTER protection for cover mounted disks. The jewel cases shatter on impact (I've bought enough spares to know that!)*

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,

I have A1200/20MB Conner HardDrive/Zappo CD Rom/Citizen 120D+ (Old Commodore 64 series Printer using Ami-64-Link Printer Dri-ver)

The problem I am having is while using Interword, I select Print and a window appears stating (PROGRAM FAILED (ERROR 86000003) WAIT FOR Disk ACTIVITY TO FINISH). It then gives me two options to Suspend or Reboot. If I Suspend, the program locks up and I have to reset. Or if I select Reboot, I get software failed again. If I Reboot my A1200 with my old Workbench disk (not from hard drive) and then select interword from my HardDrive and then Print, the printer works fine. I must also tell you that this problem does not happen on printing alone, but also on some PD games when I try to run them. I have a feeling it might be a hard drive problem, if so then it still is under Warranty. But could you put my mind at ease?



A. Lovelace
Hatfield

Dear A. Lovelace,

The problem is not the hard drive, It's the messing about that the Zappo CD does with your startup sequence.

I have seen quite a few readers letters complaining about booting problems with the Zappo. What has happened is that the Zappo installation has tried to be far too clever. It has created a new startup sequence, and renamed your original to Startup.std. The system tries to detect a bootable CD in the drive and carry on from there. Unfortunately this seems to cause a lot of problems as you have found out.

The thing to do is uninstall the Zappo software and revert to your original startup sequence. I would then suggest that you mount the Zappo as a CDROM rather than try to make it self booting. That will give you the maximum usageout of the system.

You could create a second startup system that does activate the Zappo as a self booting device, by creating a script (A copy of the startup-sequence thatthe Zappo created) but call it something else. A quick name swap would restore the system to be able to boot from the CD Rom.

The sequence would be from what you have now:

Rename startup-sequence to startzappo

Rename startup.std to startnormal

All you would have to do then is issue the CLI command

copy from s:startnormal to s:startup-sequence or

copy from s:startzappo to s:startup-sequence

To change automatically the startup sequence as required, see my Toolbox on IconX and script files for a more in depth look at better ways to automate this process.

PRINT

Dear *AUI*,

I am having a problem with my printer as you can see at the bottom of this page. I'm using the Amiga 1200 with 62Meg H/drive internal and a Commodore 1084S monitor. The printer is a HP Deskjet 560C using the HP Deskjet Drivers new (not the old).

Please help with the correct advice on how to rectify the problem shown below in the printout i.e. the little squares and the crosses as they are not seen on the monitor at anytime.

I would really appreciate you answering by letter rather than just in the Mag as I'm unemployed and can't always afford your brilliant mag as I get rather short of cash these days with the new baby 6 weeks ago and all those smelly nappies, as you can see I can't even afford to waste paper !!

Paul Little
Warrington

Dear Paul

There is nothing wrong with the printout at all. The effect that you see is a result of the dither pattern that is being sent to the printers to simulate the various colour shades. Try using a different dither pattern, F-S often produces better results, or if whichever package you are outputting the print with supports it, a blue noise pattern is often much better. (I also get the impression that you have set the print to a rather low resolution.) Don't forget that a printer has a MUCH higher resolution than the screen. Generally your screen will equate to under 2 sq inches of printout.

*On the subject of replies. I have stated this quite a few times. It is not the policy of **AUI** to send out replies to readers questions, however I have no objections to making use of a Stamped Self Addressed Envelope if one is provided. Note that envelopes without stamps etc. get used as scrap paper.*

VIDEO

Dear *AUI*,

Please could you help me. My setup consists of the following:

Amiga A3000 with 68030, FPU, MMU, running OS3.1 2meg chip ram, 4meg fast ram, 100meg hard drive (Quantum) Philips 8833 RGB monitor and a GVP G-Lock

The above along with Scala MM400 is used/to be used for Video Titling work. Are *AUI* due to review Scala MM400 shortly? Anyway now to my problem.

It concerns the G-Lock. No matter what I do it will not work with the A3000. I am using the correct wiring as described in the G-Lock's owners manual but all to no avail. I am also using exactly the same wiring procedure as used when I had the G-Lock connected to my A1200 and that worked OK, apart from crashing which according to someone at Silica said was due to the footwarmer supplied with some

A1200s not being powerful enough if you also have an internal hard drive built in as I did at the time.

Anyway when it is connected up properly all that happens after I re-boot is a black/blank screen. Even my Sony TV/monitor connected correctly through my record VCR (using this to monitor) shows no picture either. (Please note that except for the A3000 taking the place of the A1200 everything is the same and the A1200 works OK). What can it be?

I was thinking that it might be the DB9 cable coming from the G-Lock that connects to the joystick port 2 of the Amiga but it works fine on the A1200. Most other genlocks seem to use the parallel port and I know that you can buy a so called widget from Redmond Cable in the USA that allows the G-Lock to use the parallel port instead of the joystick 2 port I do intend to try this as a last resort when funds allow.

My joystick 2 port on the A3000 does work with a joystick as far as I can see and the monitor works OK when the G-Lock is not connected inline so there appears to be nothing wrong with my cables. It's only when the G-lock is inline that I do not get a picture of any kind.

None of this appears to be software related because what is happening is happening before you need to launch the G-lock program and I am not getting that far. Do you think that although my monitor works with the A3000 and a joystick also works with the A3000 that it still might be a problem with either or both of these ports?

I hope I have supplied enough information for you to have a good go at helping me cure this problem. If you can't help me maybe one of your loyal readers has had the same problem and can help if they get a chance to read this. Because it appears to me that all of my equipment is in good working order but the G-Lock still refuses to work with my A3000.

Wayne Olding
London

Dear Wayne,
To save me making wild guesses I'm going to pass this problem onto Gary Fenton who has seen more genlocks than I have had hot dinners.

Over to you Gary.

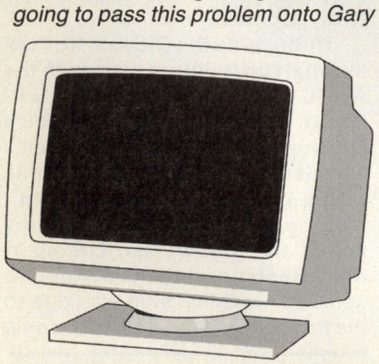
Firstly, I do intend to review Scala MM400. We've been asking Scala for a review copy for weeks, and now it's here in this very issue!! Now, to your G-Lock. It's not the 9 pin connector to the joystick port - your computer should boot with or without it plugged in. I trust you have connected the G-Lock to the 25 pin 15khz video port on the back of your 3000 with the supplied cable? Try switching off the flicker fixer at the back of the 3000 and see if that sorts the problem out.

I assume the computer boots up normally apart from the blank screen. Try connecting a monitor/TV up to the composite output from the genlock instead of the RGB through connector and see if you get a picture. Also, make sure your Workbench screenmode is PAL hires or PAL hires interlaced. I've used a G-Lock with 3000/1200/4000 Amigas without any problems and can't think of anything else to suggest.

Gary F.

Thanks Gary,

If nothing works after you try Gary's suggestions then it would point to a problem with the A3000 video output port.



VIDEO



Dear *AUI*,
This letter is primarily aimed at the Amiga Answers section and I wonder if they would provide me with some assistance with the following problems.

I have recently bought an Amiga 1200, Zappo CD ROM drive and Compaq 14" colour VGA monitor model 420T. I have set the monitor to use multiscan productivity mode and it produces a stable flicker free display with a one inch border around the Workbench display. When using multiscan productivity laced the screen display produces the normal interlace flicker making it quite hard on the eyes.

I would like to know if there is any way I can stabilise the multiscan/productivity/ laced screenmode also are there any other screenmodes I can use with this monitor. I have tried to use the doublepal screenmode but the screen just goes blank when I select it. I believe the monitor utilities you supplied to L. Hellawell in March 1995 may be of some help and wonder if you would be kind enough to supply me with them. I have enclosed a blank disk and S.A.E.

Finally, I also have an Amiga 1500, equipped with hard disk, OpalVision card, CSA Derringer accelerator card and extra memory. I currently use a Commodore 1081 colour monitor with the 1500 and was wondering if there were any way I could connect the Compaq monitor mentioned above to the 1500 to take advantage of a flicker free display. If not would it be possible if I updated the operating system to workbench 3.1? I am currently using 2.04 on this machine.

I would be extremely grateful if you could help me with these matters and once again congratulate you on an excellent magazine.

Kevin Foster
Tyne & Wear

Dear Kevin,
I have passed the first part of your letter onto the Editor for comment.

*Make sure you have VGA only in your monitors drawer, that will help a little. Apart from productivity modes, an VGA monitor will not display many of the other modes. Have you tried the Euro72 and Super72 modes? It really is a case of cut and try, some monitors are a little better than others. And you too are lucky for there is a Special Report on PC monitors to use with the Amiga in this **AUI**.*

You should have received your disk back, and the utilities should help a little.

On the subject of these disks...

I have received a small number of requests that have:

1. Not enclosed a Disk

2. Not enclosed a STAMPED SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE

Such requests get deposited in the round filing cabinet.

Also 3.5" disks are hardy things, and a stout envelope is all that is required. However, I have found that self seal letter envelopes are next to useless. Tape the flap shut just to be sure.

If anyone has not received a disk you now know the probable reason why not.

The A1500 or A2000, it's the same machine, is limited by its internal hardware. A Workbench upgrade will have no effect. There was a product called the Microway Flicker Fixer. It is no longer in production but sometimes they come up second hand. I've been using one for years on my A2000, also using Workbench 2.04 and it works very well indeed.

VIDEO



Dear *AUI*
My hair is thin; my eyes crossed; my hands almost permanently in the air. I have been jargoned until my head is spaghetti and my patience drained. I hope you can advise me.

I am using DPaint and a number of graphics packages to produce video titles and animations on the Amiga. I always work in hi res interlace so as not to compromise font resolution. As this can be very flickery, I am thinking of buying a new monitor to resolve this problem.

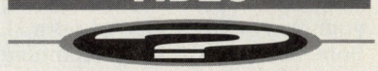
So what I want to know is this: is it possible to produce my work on a monitor with a high scan rate to reduce the flicker thereby avoiding my eyes straining AND output these same images at 15Kz in order to tape them onto a component VCR? I have a A1200 and currently a Philips 8832 MkII. Please put me out of my misery,

Ms. C Jason
London

Dear Ms. C Jason,
You have already grasped the basic requirement to output the finished image at 15Khz, the only thing to remember is that you can work in whichever screen mode that you want to, BUT you must output in a 15Khz mode when sending the image to the VCR? You need to keep a careful eye on the screen format for the mode that you want to work in, keep the same X and Y number of pixels as your 15Khz mode and you will have no problems.

Remember that the preferences settings can be saved as different names and called up as required. And this month's Special Report on Monitors should give you some useful guidance.

VIDEO



Dear *AUI*,
When turning on my 1200, there is a green tint to everything. At first I thought it was my TV modulator, but when I use my computer with my friends Microvitec 1438, the tint is still there. I tried some different monitor drivers, and the problem seems to go away. My friend then suggested that it could be my Chip Ram. Is he right?

System Details: Amiga A1200. (WB3) With 2 Meg Chip, MBX1200Z 2 Meg expansion (I have removed this and the problem still continues) 60 meg Conner hard drive. Monitor used: Microvitec 1438, using Pal modes (Green Tint) other Euro72, Super72, Multiscan (No Tint, Clear display)

Jon Lunn
West Midlands

Dear Jon
This sounds a bit odd. The only thing that I can think of is that you have managed to mess up the colour palette. Open up prefs and see if the palette looks normal. I wonder what you mean by everything has a green tint, if the background colour has been altered to green this might explain things.

It is possible that you have a faulty computer, but the one thing I can say, is that it is nothing whatsoever to do with your chip RAM.

VIDEO

Dear *AUI*,
I read with interest your replies to L.Hellawell and D.Nesbit in *AUI* March. I also have a Microvitec 1438 monitor and I am having the same problems as them. I read your reply and quickly scrambled away to Aminet and downloaded most of the files you listed. I have, using these programs, managed to get rid of my most of my borders, but I'm still left with about 10mm border on each side. No matter what I do I can't seem to make them any smaller. If only my monitor had horizontal size control. Can you help?

Also I find some games don't like me being in DBLpal Hi Res no flicker, Pinball Dreams AGA and Roadkill being the ones that I play most. When I run them the screen just bends sideways, flickers and then produces a mangled interlace mess at the top of the screen. If I switch the screen mode to Pal Hires Interlaced before playing, they launch OK. But this is a pain because to switch screen modes I have to first quit Virus checker (which runs in the background) and also quit Toolmanager, then switch screenmodes and then run the game (What a carry-on!).

I knew that I was going to encounter screen mode related problems running games through Workbench which is why I opted for the 1438 which syncs down to 15Khz. Is there any way I can make a script to quit me out of Virus Checker and Toolmanager and then run the game I clicked on? I can kill Virus checker through the ARexx port, but can't work out how to make loolmanager quit or how to change screen mode through the CLI (can it be done?

Just in case you need 'em, my specs A1200 Kickstart 39.106, Workbench 40.29 (V3.0) Microbotics M1230XA, full 50Mhz 68030, 50Mhz 68882 4Mb Fast RAM. 2Mb Chip RAM Zappo CDRom Drive :) Viruschecker v5.0 by John Veldthuis, ToolManager v2.0 by Stefan Becker.

Any hints or tips, no matter how trivial will be accepted.

Ian McCarthy
IanM@intex.dungeon.com

Dear Ian,
It might be that you have a slightly faulty monitor. I think this is so because of your comments about the display 'hooking' at the top. If the monitor does this with non-tweaked drivers then I would strongly suspect the monitor.

You don't need to kill Virus-Checker. Just de-select the Use Window button and shut the window down. VC will run in the background without any problems and can be brought up with the hotkey combination that you have set.

Toolmanager I don't use, so I cant help too much there. However RunIt can be set up to do all these things for any program. A copy was on Coverdisk 38.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
A600 1Mb
OHD
V37 + TV

1. Why when decrunching a program do you use black colour? What's my problem with that? At some stage a requester says please insert volume xxxx (but it's all black, I cannot read it!) I insert a guessed disk and then it works.

2. How do I make a 959K disk? I followed your instructions p14 April edition. I copied disk-spare.device and 2 other files to my Workbench Devs drawer. Then I merged your mountlist to my mountlist in Devs No luck!

Please could you tell me again on what I am doing wrong (does the Workbench window actually display 959k?)

For help I tried to look into the boot disk but it says "icon has no default tool) what did you do to your disk?

How do I

a) Become able to have a look in as I sometimes have problems uncrunching data - I need to de-archive manually?

b) Create a disk like that myself?

Where in your Magazine can I find "next issue out x May xx"?

Will you consider a hardware section? For example, how does an accelerator work? How do you give a computer more RAM?

I saw in a magazine a 1Mb upgrade for an A600. It had lots of little chips on the board, why? I thought manufacturers used SIMMS, that's one chip, isn't it? What do these chips do?

Why use a 1Mb simm. Can't you use/replace a 1Mb to a 2Mb or 4Mb SIMM?

Can a chip RAM upgrade be possible by a simple "piggy back" method?

Liu Chi Hui
Lancashire

Dear Lui Chi Hui,
I'll have a moan about the black. Someone is a Douglas Adams fan I think, and likes the idea of black control panels, with black controls that light up black to tell you anything!

Yes, WB shows 958K free, 1k in use when I tested it.

You need to make sure the mountlist is merged with your own, and that diskspare.device is also in your devs drawer. That's really all there is to it.

You should be able to see the high capacity disk appear as an normal disk. If not, open a CLI and type CD ds0: The disk should spin and you should see the icon appear. Once you get to that stage you should be able to put any disk in the drive and do a format DRIVE ds0: Name xxxx in the normal way.

I don't know what you are talking about with the no default tool, WHICH icon are you referring to? There are dozens of the things!

If in doubt you can ALWAYS get at things via the CLI. See my Toolbox series on this.

*On the Contents page you will find a box marked who does what... right at the end is a couple of lines that say **AUI** is published 12 times per year on the first Thursday of the month.*

Exactly what do you mean by a hardware section? If you mean a DIY hardware section then the answer is unlikely. We do frequent special features which explain all sorts of things and we have covered accelerators and such like several times in the past. We may, of course, come back to them when there are developments that need explaining.

SIMM - Single In Line Memory Module. The whole board you saw is the SIMM, the chips make up the memory, and can vary in capacity. You can get SIMMs up to 128Mb (I think) providing that your hardware can support the various types of SIMM, there is no reason why you can't chop and change. Mind you, the price tag for a 128Mb SIMM will make the wallet shudder.

The A600 utilises surface mount chips, so piggy back units are out of the question, and not really to be recommended.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
Firstly, here are my system specifications:
Amiga 1200
Zappo CD-ROM drive with V9 of the software.

The problem concerns the Zappo CD ROM drive. A compatibility problem with liberation. When the intro sequence has finished a screen appears with three options. I select Easy Game, Strategy, and then I select Start Game (game on) The gameplay screen appears, the view window then contains graphics but not always, and the music plays. No text appears in the text window. The game then Gurus.

Guru Information
Error 8000 0003
and numerous task numbers

I have used a PD program called 'the guru' to help me but it hasn't. Could you please help me?

Shaun Bellingham
West Midlands

Dear Shaun,
This appears to be a compatibility problem as you suggested. You are in the hands of Zappo I'm afraid, keep up to date with the driver software and hope things get more compatible.

OTHER

Dear *AUI*,
I am another oldie (late 40's) who is ADDICTED to his AMIGA. Not being a games player I enjoy all the utilities on your SuperDisks and also from PD and have slowly learnt about the placing of libraries, commands, scripts etc to get programs to work.

I have an AMIGA 600 OS 2.1, 1 Meg upgrade with clock, extra Cumana drive and Seikosha printer but no HD yet. As you are aware there is not a lot of room on the boot disk of OS2.1 to add other programs without deleting numerous bits and pieces. So because of this I have a few differently configured WB boot disks i.e. one with DiskSpare.Device added for doing those BIGGER disks, another with Font and Picture readers, one left for its AREXX and another with Hyper on for reading and printing AmigaGuide docs, and now 'Smartcache' has been added to all disks (what a time and drive saver eh!). So I have a disk for all reasons, must get a HD.

Excuse my waffling but my reason for writing was to comment on Mike Lee's letter in May's *AUI* Answers regarding ED and extra menu items, this made me reach for my handbook. According to my Users Guide WB 2.1 ED has two modes Immediate and Extended, it opens in Immediate mode.

Finally, as previously mentioned I have Hypertext (AmigaGuide reader) on a boot disk and

found, that on loading some files the system would crash. I had tried the usual things, changing tool types etc. but still crashed, I then thought the only differences between these files were their icons. So I loaded the files into an editor and then just resaved them with standard icons and now I can read and print all files. Hope this is of some help.

Thanking you for your time and a very good, intelligent and not to over the top technically (for us learners) magazine.

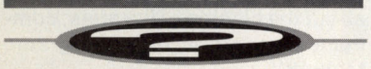
Peter Armstrong
Norwich

Dear Peter,
The Ed menu problem was probably me misinterpreting Mike's letter, again many thanks for writing in about it.

The AmigaGuide files are supposed to be read with AmigaGuide or Multiview and the AmigaGuide datatype. However, I've had several problems even with that setup!

The Icon should not make any real difference, the only points to watch out for are: the default tooltype, the stack size, and any tooltype options. If a program crashes because of differences in the icon, then that program really needs attention by its programmer. Any such errors should be checked for and reported gracefully, the program should not be allowed to crash the machine.

PRINT



Dear *AUI*,
I have recently come across a number of problems with my Amiga and they are driving me mad with frustration, so I hope that you can help.

The biggest problem is with printing. I am using an unexpanded A600 and have recently bought a Panasonic KX-P2135 printer. I am using Powertext for word-processing and Kidpix for drawing (although I would like to find a better drawing program if I can get the printing sorted out). I would like to have sufficient control over the printing to adjust the top margin because at the moment the printing starts too near the top of the page. Also ideally I would like to be able to adjust the colours when printing pictures.

I have obtained a copy of the Panasonic driver, and, have installed this onto Workbench after clearing off some of the unnecessary files. Unfortunately there is not enough space on the Workbench disk to load the Panaprefs program which I also understand is needed to work the printer and which presumably would enable me to make the adjustments I need. There is also not enough room on the Powertext disk to install even the Panasonic Driver on its own, even after deleting all other drivers.

At the moment I am getting by with using the Epson driver supplied on the Workbench for Kidpix and the driver supplied with Powertext. This is OK if I only need to print one sheet because I can use the line feed on the printer, but with more than one sheet, I'm stuffed because there is no WYSIWYG on Powertext .

I have considered and tried various options:

1. The instructions with the Panaprefs disk say that it is not necessary to install Panaprefs on the Workbench disk, and that it is possible to run Panaprefs direct from the driver. I have tried to run the driver with the Panaprefs disk in the disk drive, but either nothing happens or, if I open the Panaprefs window, a message appears saying "out of memory" .

2. I telephoned Panasonic who were not particularly helpful. They suggested that I try to construct my own disk from scratch, but I am not clear about which files I would need. Also I have read the Amiga Manual (Chapter 7 on AmigaDOS) and it is not clear on how to copy a file from one disk to another. (This has also caused me problems when trying to unpack cover disks in the past - just how do you copy libraries and fonts on to unpacked disks so that they work?).

3. And then, talking of cover disks, on the newsagent's shelf, I saw the March edition of Amiga User International together with the Super Printer Utilities disk. Was this the answer to the problem? No such luck. I unpacked the relevant program, but could only find a file called Aminet Roadmap. Even by showing all icons I could only find something called "C" which contained yet more gobbledygook. Could this disk help, and if so could you please tell me how to get it working? (In plain English please!)

4. Various other ideas have occurred to me. If I bought a better wordprocessor, eg Penpal, Mini-Office or Kindwords 3, do they have drivers which would let me control the text, and would they run OK on my system? (I might be prepared to get a memory expansion or a second floppy drive if necessary and perhaps a hard drive if pushed but would prefer to manage with my present set up, and accept the inevitable disk swapping).

5. Finally, I could trash the lot, save up tons of cash for many years and buy a PC.

Sorry this letter has dragged on, but it shows how frustrating things can be for an inexperienced user who is looking to do something that, on the face of it, seems relatively simple.

I enclose an SAE for a reply, if you are unable to answer in the mag, and I hope you can help.

Colin Stiles
Oxon

Dear Colin,
We try to get all letters answered in print eventually, however, there is a delay due to the publishing cycle.

Your problem is that of space. The unexpanded system that you have is only just useable. All the expansion that you mention would help. A hard drive would be the best step, but even a second floppy can make life much better. You should have a meg of RAM, and I'm surprised that you get an out of memory error.

Clearing off a Workbench disk is always tricky, but here's a list of files and directories that you can delete without too much bother. This will free up about 100K of space.

C: directory
CPU
Diskdoctor
ED
EDIT
MagTape
Utilities:
Clock
Display
Say

That should give you enough space to play with. In the Devs:printer drawer you can get rid of all printers except your Panasonic driver.

Copy the Panasonic panaprefs into ram: then put your Workbench disk back into the drive and you should be able to change the settings.

I don't know much about Powertext, but have you tried EdWord on SuperDisk 49? And for a paint package you will not beat Personal Paint on Superdisk 31.

Copying files with one disk is a pain. However, there are two ways to do this. Open you the DESTINATION disk window first. Open it up so that you have the window where you want to put things open on the screen.

Remove the disk, and put your SOURCE disk in. Open it up and find the file that you want to copy. Drag the file into the Destination window that you left open. Follow the prompts and swap disks.

The second method, and one that I think is much easier, is a two stage process. Source disk into drive, find files, drag into the ram: disk. Destination disk in, open to the required directory and drag the files from the RAM disk into the correct directory. I know this is a two stage process, but it requires a lot less disk swapping to work.

On the SuperDisks, follow the instructions, i.e. boot from SuperDisk 53, and select b as the option, and the scripts will build you the printer disk. I've just done so. Unfortunately there are no Panasonic drivers. There are readme files for all the programs where necessary. The drivers have no readme, as they are just drivers that you use in the same way as any other driver.

You have the Panasonic driver anyway, and I don't think that you will get much better.

You should find the following:

```
superdiskscripts        Dir
General_Utils.info      564
Printer_Utils.info      564
SuperDiskscripts.info   564
c                       Dir
disk.info               620
general_utils           Dir
printer_utils           Dir
```

PRINT



Dear *AUI*,
I can't get Landscape to load. Basic A1200, WB3 etc. It says attempting to load, makes noises to suggest the disk is being accessed and them it just stops. Repeated double clicks on the icon creates the same result. Any ideas?

I am in the market for a new printer. This one has problems which may well be evident to you on this printed page. I am considering going for an old Commodore 1500C 12 dot matrix to a colour inkjet and guess what I don't know which one to get. I am looking for sharpness, quietness of operation refillable/replaceable individual colours as black is going to be used most of all, speed reliability, ease of operation and the ability to print close to the top and bottom of single sheet A4 and guess what again, I want to spend as little as possible. Some advice would be appreciated maybe a couple of options.

Why, if the Amiga is a multitasking computer, is it not possible to print a document from say Wordworth or Final Copy II and simultaneously edit another document with the same program? The Amstrad's Locoscript will let me do it, in fact Locoscript is a terrific program with a number of features the aforementioned do not have unfortunately. So why can't the Amiga's wordprocessing programs do it? Is it a complication with the Amiga itself or is it shortsightedness on the part of the programmers? For I'm surely not alone in finding that huge

amounts of time are wasted whilst waiting for a document to print out.

Derek Baxter

Dear Derek,
Please see my reply to Clive Johnson about Landscape.

Printers, well, the Canon range are very well respected. The new Epson colour is breathtaking. I'm not really a fan of refilling print heads, the results can be a bit variable, but for draft work I suppose it would be OK. I have two pieces of advice. Go and LOOK at some printers, and get a copy of Studio as your driver. And you might look in out June ***AUI*** *at the Special Report on colour printers for some useful extra information.*

Background printing is dependent on the programmers, you quite rightly state that the Amiga is multitasking, so there is no problem there. Protext which is the WP that I normally use, background prints without any problems at all.

I do have a copy of Wordworth, and as you say it is lacking in a couple of very important areas. Auto paragraph numbering, cross references and variables just to name a few. I find that it is also very slow to use. However, it fits my needs as a quick DTP-Like program for the occasional use. (It's a little easier to use than PageSetter)

PRINT



Dear *AUI*,
I have an Amiga A1200 (4MB) with 80 MB HD and I have recently bought a Hewlett Packard 320 Desk Jet with studio light driver. I have tried to print from Kindwords 3 but keep getting No printer device message on the screen. I have written to HP but I still have had no success. As I am not too well versed in printers I would be grateful for any advice on using this printer or do I need a new driver?

A. McBunnie
N.Ireland.

Dear A. McBunnie,
You have a version of the very best printer driver system in existence. Studio light is a cut down version of Wolf Faust's Studio printer driver system. (He has just released Studio Pro 2).

The first thing to do is to check that you have installed the driver system correctly.

Open up the preferences program and click on the printer preferences. You should see that the printer driver is the Studio printer driver, which is normally called pindriver.

You should also have a Studio Preferences program (pinprefs) that you can use to tweak the results to get the very best output, but don't worry about that for now.

If you don't see the pindriver driver, then you need to go back to square one and ensure that you install Studio light correctly.

Forget Kindwords for the moment, find a picture that you would like to print, and then activate the Studio program. Find and select the picture in the file requester that pops up, and let studio get on with printing it.

Providing that you have installed Studio correctly, you should find that everything will print out.

Once you get to this stage, try Kindwords again. There may be a setting for Kindwords that tells it which printer driver to use, consult your handbook. (I don't have a copy of Kindwords but ICPUG might be able to help).

OS



Dear *AUI*,
I seem to be having some problems with my Workbench 2.0 disk, and I could sure use any help or advice you may have on the issue. I have forgone the usual plutocratic fawning that usually accompanies the letters that are written, however does this ego-enlarging exercise ensure swifter and more accurate results? Furthermore, can I really afford to damage your delicate sensibilities? It is obvious that I find the publication of interest otherwise I would not spend my hard earned dole money on you.

Anyway, to the problem at hand. A while ago, a friend was messing around with my Workbench disk, to whit, he added a copy of X-COPY PRO. However, now every time I boot up the disk I get the following messages : "Unable to open your tool 'sys: System/BindMonitor'; That's not all, there then follows a further message which reads, "Program 'Mode Names' has not yet returned. Should I wait some more?". Now while I have not worried myself too much over their presence, it is slightly annoying and time consuming. I have searched the Workbench manual, but to no avail. Also it appears that there is something wrong with my Shell window, as every time I go to open it, yet another message pops up, this one says, 'Unable to open your tool, Sys:System/CLI'. What's going on? Any ideas?

Gareth Jones
Northants

Dear Gareth,
The nice comments that some people write are welcome, but they don't make any difference to the quality of the reply. I occasionally get miffed when someone shouts the odds, but if I get really annoyed I just pass the letter onto Bud who is THE expert at shouting back.

Your problem is your friend. He has messed up your Workbench disk and caused quite a bit of trouble. I would recommend that you make a new copy of your boot disk from your Workbench master and go back to square one.

To summarise what is going on:
sys:system/BindMonitor

This is a program that sets up the monitors. It lives in the system drawer of your boot disk. I expect your friend deleted it.

The message ModeNames has not returned because of the same reason. ModeNames lives in the Workbench startup drawer. If you check the tooltype ModeNames uses BindMonitor, so if BindMonitor is not about it will just hang.

Lastly, Unable to open your tool sys:system/CLI. In the system drawer of your boot disk you should have the CLI (Looks just like a Shell icon). Again I expect that your friend has deleted it.

OS



Dear *AUI*,
My problem with my Amiga A500+ is that I still get the (unable to open your Tool Library) message I tried the March issue DefTool 12 and followed the instructions without being able to use the others like Invoicer or Bluff Titler. I find that a lot of the utilities give me the same problem.

I have added 1Mg to my machine, making it 2Mg so that I could use Imagine 3d and it works great but a lot the utilities from Amiga User International are left unused because the message (unable to find Amiga Guide)also I am unable to use disks with AGA because my monitor model 1081 Commodore needs higher speed monitors to work on AGA.

I have tried a number of WP and found that PageSetter and Textcraft to be good enough for typing posters and newsletters yet have not found one that does a A4 sideways. My printer, a StarLC20, is limited to 10 inch across and most A4 paper measure 11 and half inches.

Any ideas to which Desktop Publishing System would be perfect for this? Also I'm unable to use the *AUI* March95-f because I don't have an Art Department or Image Studio Superdisk 47. Any suggestions other than buying a back copy as most newsagents don't keep them aside when asked in Irvine.

George Barr
Irvine
Scotland

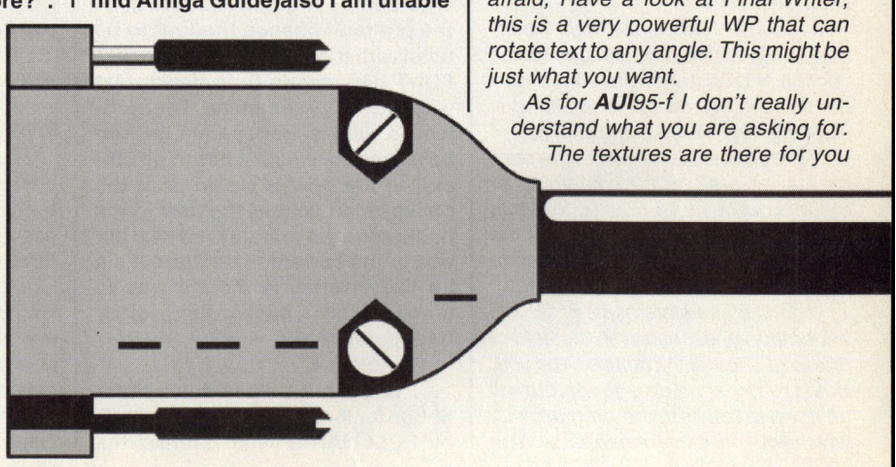
Dear George,
You have to tell the programs where YOU have saved your copies of the various viewer programs. I assume that you are using a hard drive, and I would think that you have moved the utilities somewhere other than the default directory. Click once on the icon that gives you problems and then select Icons/information from the workbench menu. You will get a window that will show you what the default tools are. You need to modify this to point at wherever you have put the tools.

AmigaGuide is available for all major PD libraries and you just need a copy of it in your main search paths.

Your monitor is quite capable of displaying AGA images. The only limitation will be in the number of screen modes that the 1081 can handle, i.e. not high scan rates. In any case, the problem is irrelevant, it is your A500+ that cannot handle AGA, it is not fitted with the AGA chipset.

A4 sideways, you don't really mean that! You want to print out a rotated image. You will have to look at the more advanced programs, I'm afraid, Have a look at Final Writer, this is a very powerful WP that can rotate text to any angle. This might be just what you want.

As for ***AUI****95-f I don't really understand what you are asking for. The textures are there for you*



*to use as you see fit. Generally you can get back issues of any magazine from the distributers for about 3 months. Other than that **AUI** can supply some back issues, but it is best to phone the **AUI** office first to check availability. Or look in the special back issues page we publish regularly now.*

PRINT

Dear *AUI*,
I have an A600HD (20MB)
2Mb with clock
2nd hand SCART Monitor
HP DeskJet 500c

For Christmas I had an HP DeskJet 500c which as you probably know does not have a printer driver included on the Workbench disk, so I was overjoyed when I purchased the March edition of your magazine (which I get regularly) because it had the appropriate printer driver included on the Coverdisk. I decompressed the disk with it on and immediately installed the driver. But, when I eagerly attempted to print something from DPaint IV the computer came up with error 8000 something or other and the program crashed.

This happened with Photonpaint, DPaint III, PenPal and all the printing utilities on the Coverdisk. I do not think this is me because I have been running the printer using the HP DeskJet printer driver included with Workbench and no problems have occurred. Do not tell me to continue using this printer driver because it only allows black and white printing. Why does it do this and is there a solution?

Another thing I'd like to ask you, is do you think that Personal Paint V6 is better than DPaint IV? Because I am thinking of buying this for my animations and would like to know all the main advantages it has over DPaint 4 which I have been using for the past 3 years.

Ted Bradley
Lincoln

Dear Ted,
You have not told me the most important thing about your Amiga. Which version of Workbench are you using. I get the impression that something is clashing very badly somewhere. It is very important to tell me what the error messages are? '8000 something or other' is not helpful. I would guess that it was a 8000 0003 error, which is the most common type of crash for incompatible programs.

I don't make statements of the x is better than y, especially in the field of drawing! The limiting factor will be you. Both programs will do a good job, it will be down to you as to the program with which you feel more comfortable. You could check out the reviews we have had of the two programs. That would certainly give you a guide.

PRINT

Dear *AUI*,
Congratulations on a great magazine, with great contents and fantastic cover disks. It beats the life out of me why no other mag follows your lead with the disks. Still so long as you do them like you do I'm not bothered. I now make a plea for you to reply to this letter, as this is the only mag I read (the girlfriend bought me a subscription for Xmas), thank you in advance.

My system:
A 1200 with Workbench 3.0
340 meg hard drive
standard 2 meg chip ram
Star LC 100 colour printer
poor colour telly
Problem 1.

This refers to the poor colour telly. It's doing my eye sight in, so I want to buy a monitor. Is the PHILIPS 8833 MK2 a good choice. If not, can you recommend one that is. I can't afford a multi sync.

Problem 2.

I program in GFA BASIC V3.51. The problem is I can't access the printer control commands properly. Commands such as 'CHR$ (15), to condense print will work, but any command that uses the escape code will not, EG CHR$(27); CHR$(52), for italics won't work. Either the printer or the Amiga ignores the commands completely. I have phoned GFA and they couldn't help a great deal as it was programmed in Germany by a third party. Any help would be grateful.

Problem 3.

Because of the problems with the printer and GFA I have since turned to AMOS PRO V1.12. With AMOS I'm trying to print out graphics and text together. The easiest way to do this is to display the image and text to the screen and use the command 'PRINTER DUMP'. This dumps the current screen to the printer. I change the font to be used with the GET FONTS' and SET FONT' commands, then display text with the 'TEXT command. The problem is with a transparent screen background (which it has to be otherwise the printer would print the background colour) the new font's background is orangey red with the text in the current ink colour. It's a bit like inverse. Is there a way to make the font's background colour transparent?

Problem 4.

I've bought a black only printer ribbon for the STAR which was made by FULLMARK. What should the internal EDS settings be for the black ribbon as there are 2 possibilities and the manual only gives settings for original STAR ribbons?

Problem 5.

The Star LC 100 colour printer has a command to change the graphics densities from '6O dpi to 12O dpi and '24O dpi It isn't very clear in the manual how to do this (Or rather it isn't very clear to me), It says escape code, command code, then 4 numbers', Please could you tell me in plain English how to change the density and what the 4 numbers should be for each mode and how they are arrived at?

Thank you for any advice given and keep up the good work.

Mark Holland
Barnsley

Dear Mark,
Please try to avoid certain words, it can annoy some people. I've changed your word to "poor".

*The 8833 is a good basic monitor, however you will only get the basic modes. If you can, a multisync or even a SVGA type of monitor would be a better investment. Still the wallet rules as always. You are in luck, however, because in this **AUI** we have a Special Report on monitors that should give you all the guidance you need to select an appropriate monitor within your price range.*

I don't use GFA, or any Basic that much, but I think that you might be falling into an old trap. There are TWO basic methods of driving a printer. The first is via the installed preferences printer driver,and the second is via the raw output. Send data via the PRT: device and the printer driver will intercept it. Send data to the PAR: device and it will go out in raw form.

If you use the PRT: device you should only use the ANSI X3.64 Style commands which will be listed in your Amiga manuals. It is the job of the printer driver to convert these commands into whatever printer escape sequences are required.

The trick with AMOS is to make the printer print the background. If you set the background to WHITE, what do you think the printer will print?

Use the PAPER command to set text backgrounds.

Ribbons are ribbons, set the printer to black or colour as required.

I can't help all that much with the print density settings, they tend to vary a bit from printer to printer, and I don't use Star printers. Most printers do follow the Epson style commands, so:

*The generic Epson command is Escape * m n1 n2 where m is the mode and n1 and n2 are the number of columns to be printed. So if you wanted to print in 60dpi, 24pin head, and want to print 1234 columns of data the command would be (in decimal):*

27 42 32 4 210 (followed by 3702 data bytes)

32 is the Epson mode for a 24 pin head in 60 dpi mode.

*For a 24 pin head you need 3*8 bit bytes to make each column, hence you need 3 times the amount of data.*

*The 4 and 210 is simply a two byte representation of the column count. 4*256 = 1024 + 210 = 1234.*

Please remember that I don't have access to every single manual for every single printer. If you need help in deciphering a particular command send me a photocopy of the offending page(s) of your manual.

APPS

Dear *AUI*,
I'm having problem with the LZX program found on SuperDisk 57. For years I've been using Lha program with following options Lha -x -a a, anyway I'm running Lzx within Sid2 utility and I am having a problem getting Lzx to compress sub-dirs, if I use Lzx -x -a a I keep getting following message "cannot open original file ? For input" (? = Name of directory)

If I use Lzx -r -a a with wildcard #? I get the above message + "error getting file composition of ?" At least by using #? Lzx does compress sub-dirs but it compresses everything and I only want highlighted directories and files compressed not everything. Please let me know how to solve this problem. I would also be grateful to know what the messages mean. I have a B2000 with hard drive 3mb Ram & WB2.04.

Robert Hart
London

Dear Robert,
This caused me to tear my hair out for a while, and so I discussed the problem with a friend who gave me the solution. The command line is: Lzx -a -r a but the trick is the AFTER DIRS entry on SID in the LAUNCH config for the button. You need to select the #? Option, that's all there is to it.

The CLI command line would be Lzx -r -a a lzxfilename directoryname#?

I must admit it would have been useful if the Lzx documentation mentioned this!

APPS

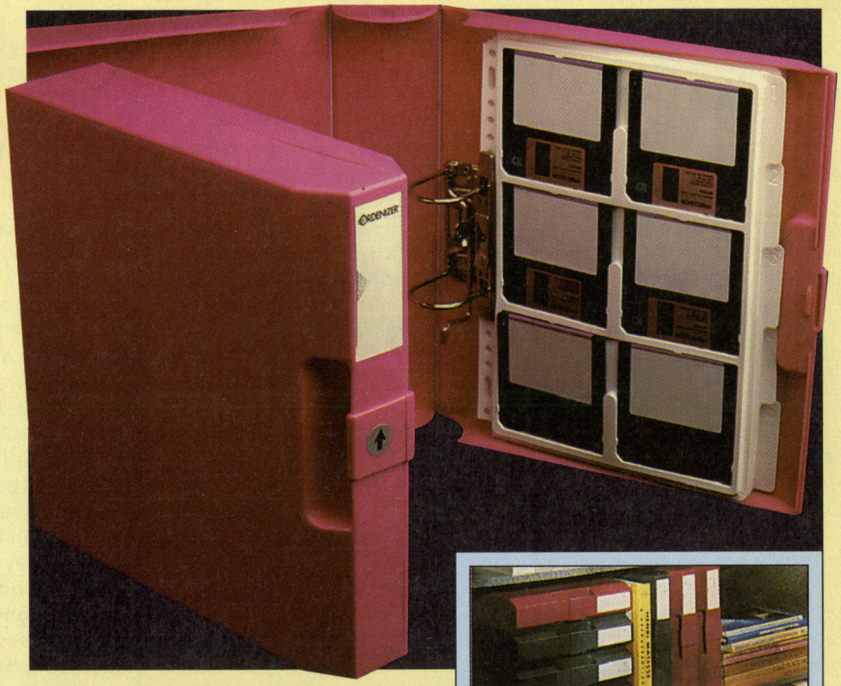
Dear *AUI*,
I have an Amiga 500 with Kickstart 1.3, an A501 expansion module and an A590 hard drive and memory expansion.

Please let me know about available word processor programs (other than Scribble) which will run satisfactorily on this machine.

N.K.Gardner

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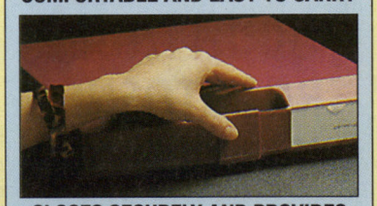
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Dear N.K. Gardner,
You don't say what capacity you have available on your hard drive, but providing that you have about 4 megs free then you can use quite a few of the major packages. Your main problem is that you may be running Workbench 1.3 (you mention Kickstart but not Workbench versions). You should seriously consider upgrading to Workbench 2, this will enable you to run just about all of the major WP packages.

As to which one, that's a harder choice. I use Protext for 99% of the work I do, mainly because it is fast and uncluttered. The graphical nature of any 'what you see is what you get' tends to slow things down. On a standard A500 you might find this unacceptable.

Printer output is another area to consider. Protext uses the printers own fonts, so you do get the very best that the printer can offer. On the other hand you cannot use all the nice fancy compugraphic fonts that are available.

In reality there is not a lot of difference between any of the major packages if all you want to do is bash out the odd letter. Anything more than that and you need to consider which features you really need and do a bit of research.

As an aside, if you only want to do some letter bashing, have you had a look at EdWord on Superdisk 49? It is a very competent program indeed.

APPS

Dear *AUI*,
SYSTEM SET-UP:

A1200, 2nd disk drive, 130 MB internal, Panasonic KXP2123 colour printer, and a rather old, ELECTROHOME, (high resolution data display) .

For the past two years I have been a loyal user of the A600 which had the above items connected to it except the printer which was a KXP1170 B&W. About three weeks ago I decided to upgrade to an A1200 which I bought from a student nurse who only used it for typing and printing course projects. When I set up the 1200 as above, I decided to start afresh.

I formatted my H.D. and installed WB3.0 with two other partitions DH1:work & DH2:games. I also installed MagicWB and a utility called AddTools. (very handy item).

My problem is this. I installed DPaintIV to Work:DPaintIV using the install program provided on the disk, I run DPaint by double clicking on the icon. Everything works OK except when I quit from the system crashes. If I run it from the AddTools menu everything works OK including when I quit. I put this ASSIGN in my startup-sequence "ASSIGN DPaint: DH1:DPaintIV/DPaint" but it doesn't help.

2nd problem: DPaintIV-AGA from the Desktop Dynamite Pack does not have an install program, so after contacting Electronic Arts, I was instructed to open my DH1: partition and drag the disk icon into it which I did. The program works both by double clicking on the icon and from the AddTools menu, but it crashes when I quit from both. I have checked my H.D. with a virus killer and got the all clear. So do I have a computer fault, a program fault or is there something I have missed? I should add that I have copied all commands and Directories from the floppy disks to the relevant places on my sys: partition of my H.D.

Trevor Moore
Londonderry.

Dear Trevor,
There should be no reason for this to happen. Check that you have an adequate stack set up (Icon/information) and one other thing that you can try is to get rid of any non standard system. So uninstall MagicWB and see if that helps.

As a general tip, it is worth going right back to a basic Workbench system when faced with 'strange' program hangs. It is surprising just how many utilities cause problems of one sort or another.

COMMS

Dear *AUI*,
I know you have been receiving so many e-mails that you have regretted the day you gave your e-mail address to the public, but I have just one serious and important question.

I have found an AmigaCD32 at a very low price (around £130) and since I already own an A1200, I wonder whether it is possible to connect those two and use the CD drive as a regular AmigaDOS volume. I am already aware of the Twin-Express solution, but I must say, I'm not ecstatic about it, so I am looking for an alternative

Thanos Chatziathanassi

Dear Thanos
*Check out the Network CD by Weird Science that sets up a SerNET system which is just what you are asking for. They generally advertise in **AUI**.*

COMMS

Dear *AUI*,
Thanks for the monitor programs, and as you say, there's a lot of combinations to try. My display is better now, so they've proved quite useful, but I haven't exhausted the possibilities yet.

I didn't realise ParNET could lock up the parallel port; I've never had a problem of any kind with it. The version I use is ParBENCH, Parnet.Iinstall.V31f.

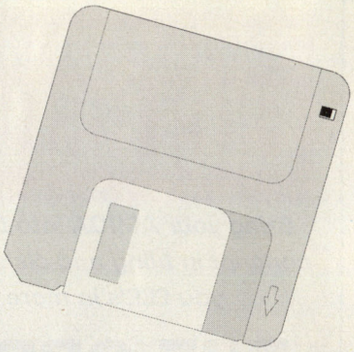
Anyway, I've bought a second-hand CD32 to replace my CDTV, as I need to read Photo CDs now. I'm using SerNET, on the Network CD, and as I'm sure you're aware, this is much slower than ParNET. Also on the CD is TwinExpress, and here lies my problem.

To use TwinExpress a keyboard is needed on both machines, and as I don't have one for my CD32 I was wondering if there is a cheap compatible keyboard I could use, for example would any of the PC ones fit? As I only need to enter "TWIN SER (speed)" function keys etc. aren't important to me. I don't mind making an adaptor or changing the plug, providing the relevant pinout details are available.

Another question I have is how much faster is the transfer rate likely to be using TwinExpress as opposed to SerNET? As only a 3 wire cable is possible (I assume)I realise the faster speeds would not work. Also, I presume the speed of data transfer from the CD itself would be the limiting factor.

Any advice you can give will be most welcome.

Steve Ellison
Dunstable.



Dear Steve,
Setting up Twin Express is fairly easy with a keyboard as you say. The common method is to use Twin in its default mode, and send a simple script file to the RAM disk, when executed this changes mode. Quite often a recoverable RAM disk is used to speed up booting. However, I can offer a slightly easier method. You will need access to a CD with Fish disk 412. On that you will find a program called OSK. This is On Screen Keyboard, and can be used instead of the keyboard.

The CD32 accepts a A4000 keyboard, and I am told that using an OS2-AT adaptor, the A2000 keyboard can be used. However, the adaptor that I tried did not work, so a bit of experimentation will be required.

Thanks for the info on ParNet, I expect it is reacting with something in the two systems I am playing about with. It is not supposed to lock up but it does happen. I don't really use it that much now so the urgency of tracking down this problem has gone away. ***AUI***



When writing to Amiga Answers include as much information as possible about your system and about which software/hardware you are running. This will help to determine what your problem might be and its solution! Send your questions to:

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THE PD STAKEOUT

Mark Blackham leads you through the ever-changing, down-to-earth, not-quite-free world of the Public Domain.

Scoring

The marks awarded to each PD disk are based purely upon its own merits and, of course, our personal views. Value for money and reliability are also taken into account as well as features and quality of the software.

Compatibility

The PD disks reviewed in this issue were tested on various Amigas. Check with your PD supplier that the disks you are ordering are compatible with your Amiga.

PD or ShareWare?

All freely distributable software comes under the rather deceptive umbrella of "public domain". Quite a lot of this software is, in fact, shareware. Shareware means that if you like the software, or use it regularly, the author will request a reasonable donation from £5 to £20. There is usually a note on the disk informing you if the software is shareware or regular PD.

Whether or not you send a donation to the author depends totally upon your level of conscience and morals. Remember, if you send a donation to the author, you may receive an updated version of the software. Even if you don't receive an update, you will have given the author the incentive to continue contributing into the public domain.



A multicoloured Dr Who tunnel stands out in the RootsII demo.

Freestyle PD

The best demo we reviewed this month. Very, very hot. Fantastic music pumps this sprightly demo along through some fascinating graphic tricks.

Made for 68020 or better Amigas, Roots packs a hell of a punch into one disk - especially since there is no AGA used.

The multi-coloured Dr Who tunnel was the most impressive sequence, although there was a range of other great tricks which made me whistle, like the BBC spinning world, an isolated spiral galaxy and a spinning head which warps into a hand. Lots of colour and patterns spin are used, interspersed with great hand-drawn images - it fair makes your screen wobble and warp. The images - more like paintings - are in a very oil-on-canvas, tortured thick graphic style which would not look out of place in a frame.

The Doom environment must have been intended as a bit of a joke - very smooth, but who needs it?

This is one heck of a capable demo. Get hold of a copy. Now.

IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY

***Shoah PD* No. 0079 (2 disks)**

Whoah, guys. A pitiful attempt at a "Deep and Meaningful" title which indicates a lot of the empty pretence involved in this demo.

Dumb and uninventive high pitched music whines its way through average graphical tricks. Presentation is another matter. These guys are good. It feels and looks like television/movie graphics. The pace, smoothness, quality and slickness are extremely professional. They have an intuitive feel for making the best of what they have.all that these guys - who call themselves Mystic - need now is some inspiration, and a better source for the music.

82%

TEMPLE OF DECEASE

Freestyle PD

Oxyron and AIDS positive (!) have put together a straight-forward demo (Check it with a virus finder?) that fools around with all those usual techniques again like mapped vectors and alpha channel. The standard is pretty good, but the highlight is the rendered grave environment. The graphical trickery is played out on the grave stone.

This effect won't make up for the short unremarkable graphics and weedy music. We expect more from AGA. Sorry guys.

69%

LATEST GAMES

VCHESS V3.1 [2.04+] Very nicely presented chess game - play against another human or against the CPU.
GALAGA DELUXE V2.53 [2.04+] Utterly superb update to this wonderful arcade conversion. Stunning sound and graphics.
HYPERACE (3, AGA) Very nice top down motor racing game for 1-4 players, nice graphics and sound very akin to Nitro.
TOTAL DOMINATION Two players play against each other for control of The Galaxy.
ALIENOID Very nice bat & ball/breakout/Arkanoid game - great music and backdrops, well put together. 1 or 2 players - well worth a look.
HIRED GUNS PREVIEW Single level playable demo of this superb game from Psygnosis - try before you buy!
SUPREME FIGHTER Excellent adventure beat 'em up from Meditation.
BEAVIS & BUTTHEAD MTV's antiheroes appear now on the Amiga.
CYBERSPHERE A breakout/Arkanoid clone with good graphics, explosions, sound effects.
NIGEL MANSELL'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (AGA) Superb single lap introduction to the excellent grand prix game of the same name.
JET SET WILLY 3 Very nice remake of the fabulous and very famous platformer.
STEP FIVE V1.1 Nice Tetris variant with different peices to the original and a few extra features with nice music too.
DR STRANGE 2 [2.04+] Superb platformer that is the follow up to one of the best PD games ever.
FEARV2.0 (AGA) Update to the stunning doom clone. Utterly fantastic and superb. Much better control and graphics
COW WARS Highly amusing 2 player artillery game. Fire three cows across a mountain and attempt to hit your opponent.
SEEK AND DESTROY Demo of a top down, multi-directional scrolling hilcopter shoot'em up of immense proportions.
GOAL! A playable preview of the follow up to Kick Off.
SENSIBLE SOCCER V1.1 Play with England sides from 1944, 1966 or 1993.
PITFIGHTER Playable demo of the superb fighting game. Not 1200
POKERMANIA (AGA) Fabulous gambling production. Fruit machine with cards but retains all the features, nudges, repeats, jackpot etc along with the gambles.
BLOODWARS V2.0 (AGA) A four player strategy game with nice gfx.
EMERALD MINE V6.0 Preview to the editor and game
MERCURY MISSION A thrust type game with good graphics
BLOOD BALL Strategy sports game
CYBERMAN Exellent 3D Pacman game
T-RACER A stunning shoot'em up
BLASTAR Great shoot'em up
OVERDRIVE
AMIGA THRUST (AGA) Screen mode up to 1024 X 1024 with 32 colours!

DEMOS

SHWARTZ: CAMOUFLAGE Another aerotoon by all accounts.
DESERT ISLAND DICK Several amusing line animations of Dicks desert island capers.
THE GOLFERS GUIDE (1.5 MEG) Incredibly gory but very amusing animation of a few ways to ensure improvement to your game of golf.
IMPACT: FUTURISTIC MIND (AGA)
X-TRADE: AMONG THE LIVING (AGA)
DIGITAL: SHAKKER LAKKA (AGA)
EMT: HARD DAY (AGA)
TRSI: ANHALONIUM LEWINI (AGA)
NO REFUND (2)
TRSI: CUBIC DREAM (2, AGA)
MYSTIC: IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY (2, AGA)
DREAMDEALERS: IMAGINE (AGA)
TRSI: ARTIFICE (2, AGA)
SPACEBALLS: KLEINE JONGEN
LATE NIGHT/AMY JOGS 2 Eric Schwartz animations on this disk.
DOLPHIN DREAMS
FREEZERS: DEATHWALKER (2)
ILLUSION: ABERRATIONS (2, AGA)
JAMMIN' (AGA)
GIGATRON: PRIMAL SCREAM (AGA)
QUANTUM INC: STOP IT (AGA)
SARDONYX: KEWL (AGA)
C-RAD MODULES
PERCEPTION: MAGNITUDE (AGA)
LUDWIG MODULES
SILLY WHININGS (3, AGA, HD)
BASS: HARDCORE VOL 1
WATERFALL (AGA)
TAJ MA HOUSE (AGA)

SLIDES

CRY FOR DAWN (2) Representation of a comic strip of the horror variety
MOSAIC SLIDESHOW Recently given fab reviews in CU Amiga.
STREETFIGHTER II & MANGA BABES (AGA) Stunning examples of raytraced artwork by Tomwoof. Features the Manga babes and characters from Streetfighter II all raytraced and superb.
WILD WHEELS AGA Collection of JPEGS featuring Maclaren F1 and other selected muscle cars.
NIKI TAYLOR (2, AGA)
TRSI: SUN (2, AGA)

INTERESTS

EPISODE GUIDE Contains episode listings for over 40 programs from horror to animation
EYWTKA: ANIME/MANGA Another (Everything You Wanted Know About.....).
EYWTKA: AMIGA E Beginners guide to how to code in Amiga E.
EYWTKA: PART #1 Amiga CD-ROMs, Shared Libraries and Networking.
PRO-LOTTERY V1.1 Very well presented lottery information and prediction using various methods.
WORDSEARCH DESIGNER [2.04+]
BALLS V0.99 (AGA) Proffessionally presented lottery number generator with past number influences, least frequent, most frequent, hot numbers, 8 person syndicate board generation Etc.
JOKES PART 1 Inject yourself with this barrage of humour.
MYTHOS: GREEK MYTHOLOGY Exceptionally well presented book of facts about Greek Mythology.
NODDY'S PLAYTIME Very colourful children's title. Match up the sliding puzzle to reveal various animals featuring Noddy and Big Ears.
GCSE EXAM PAPERS An invaluable study tool for students aged 16yrs who are revising for their exams.
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UTILITIES

GRAPHIC CONVERTERS (2) [2.04+]
JPEG TO AGA CONVERTER V1.4 This program converts ppm, pgm and pbm files to IFF-ILBM with support for AGA graphics modes.
ICON TOOLBOX V2.12 [2.04+] Mass create icons, mass alter default tool, resize etc.
IMAGEDESK V1.5 (AGA) ImageDesk is a program to catalog your picture directories.
AFCOPY V4.4 [2.04+] DOpus like file manager - fully user configurable.
MEENY MENO SYSTEM [2.04+] Similar to Menu Master etc. Ideal for launching stuff from your workbench.
DOPUS MAGIC COMPANION [2.04+] Lots of extra bits and peices for the fabulous File Manager
BLITZBLANKER V2.5A [2.04+] New screenblanker with loads and loads of options and modules and fixes etc.
SWAZBLANKER V2.7 (AGA)
MR BACKUP V2.1.4 [2.04+] A hard drive backup program. Very handy
VIRUS WORKSHOP V4.8 [2.04+]
MAGIC CX [2.04+] This adds a whole host of new features to your workbench.
SMALLMAGIC [2.04+] This is the solution for those who like MagicWb but can't afford to run a workbench in 640*512 or higher.
POOLS LOVE TOOLS 2 Contains Pro-Wizard V2.1, VirusChecker V6.22, Powertracker, Noiseplayer V2.11, SysInfo V3.23, FixDisk V1.5, CrunchMania V1.91, Re-Org V3.11 all include documentation where possible.
CHILLED ARCHIVES [2.04+] Lha archives of the following files: Startup Manager V1.2, Nine Datatypes, DMS Magic User V0.5, Exotic Ripper V2.27, HandyDMS V1.2 and much more!
COMPUGRAPHIC FONTS VOL 9 (6)
LION KING CLIPART (3) Superb quality full colour clipart from Disney themselves.
TINY TOONS CLIPART [2.04+] Recently given a ravishing review in one of the many Amiga mags.
VMM V3.0 020+68881 or better required
COMMS & THE NET (5) [2.04+] Loads of utils for Modems and Internet
DISK DOUBLING V1.9B Double the space of your hard drive
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MAGIC WB

MAGIC WORKBENCH V1.2P
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MAGIC WBENCH EXTRAS 2 (2)
MAGIC WBENCH EXTRAS 3 (2)
MAGIC WBENCH EXTRAS 4 (2)
MAGIC WBENCH EXTRAS 5 (2)
MAGICWB BASED ICONS V1.2
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MWB PALLETTES AND FOXX ICONS
BACKDROPS AND STARTUP PICS VOL 3
ROMANS MWB ICONS (2)

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V2.0 (3, AGA, HD)
V3.0 (4, AGA, HD, 4MB+)
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GORF +Y
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Play God

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BUST UP +Y
CASTING COUCH (2) +Y
CHEEKY CHARLIES +Y
DOMINIA 1 +Y
DOMINIA 2 +Y
THE FOX +Y
GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS 2 +Y
GON GON GIRLS +Y
HOT GIRLS +Y
JADE AGA (6) Y
MAGNIFICO (5) +Y
MELONS AGA (4) Y
MAYFAIR BEAUTIES 1 +Y
MAYFAIR BEAUTIES 2 +Y
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It's OK to boast when you've got the most.

Drugstore

Freestyle PD

A popular pastime of demos is the boasting and gloating of techniques the coders use and achieve with their graphics.

Naturally they make up intricate names for some of these strange effects - so don't think they're talking some technical jargon. This demo is chocka with buzzwords like plasmavectors, multimcolourvectors, sinescroll, circlescroll, and abyssvectors.

It opens with a ball trampoline-ing on a flexing flat eye comprised of dots.

The two-disk demo quickly dips into some turgid mucking about, although the rotating prism over a robot image, magnifying and displacing the image through the prism is impressive.

The second disk fiddles about with AGA multicolour twirling images, but never takes your breath away.

Technically astute, sometimes interesting, and with bloody annoying high pitched whining music again.

73%

Das Omen

Freestyle PD

Ain't it strange how titles pull you in or push you away from a piece of software? Das Omen got me interested. I booted it expecting a rave techno version of that Omen song a few months ago combined with some hard-edged graphics. Instead, I got some techno music which was nothing like that Omen song, but was pretty darn hard, and some lame graphics.

Actually, the music was very smart.

There were a couple of eye-catching graphics - the gouraud twist, the glass gouraud cube (the best I've seen), a vector donut and a head-bumping grind through a metallic tunnel.

Yes, Das Omen was as clever as other demos. No, it was not inspirational.

Coders like C-lous, the authors of Das Omen, have what it takes to put together an awesome demo, but they need to think of some original themes and context. It isn't enough to have an attractive title - you have to make it worth while to view.

76%

Haujobb Jammin'

Sadeness PD

A different tack with this demo. The music, led by a wah wah guitar, sets a very techno Raggae and Ska feel - cool and loose. The AGA graphics make the most of the many available colours, but to keep everything speedy and smooth some graphical blockiness has crept in.

One of the better effects is the triangles which rapidly spin in opposite directions, creating a psychedelic and perspective distorting image.

The vector time tunnel is the other standout image - although I kept losing perspective and although the smallest point of the tunnel may have been meant to disappear to the rear of the screen, it sometimes looks like it is stretching out of the front.

Not a bad effort, especially the music and slow, moody end-piece.

77%

Animatunes (AGA)

Sadeness PD

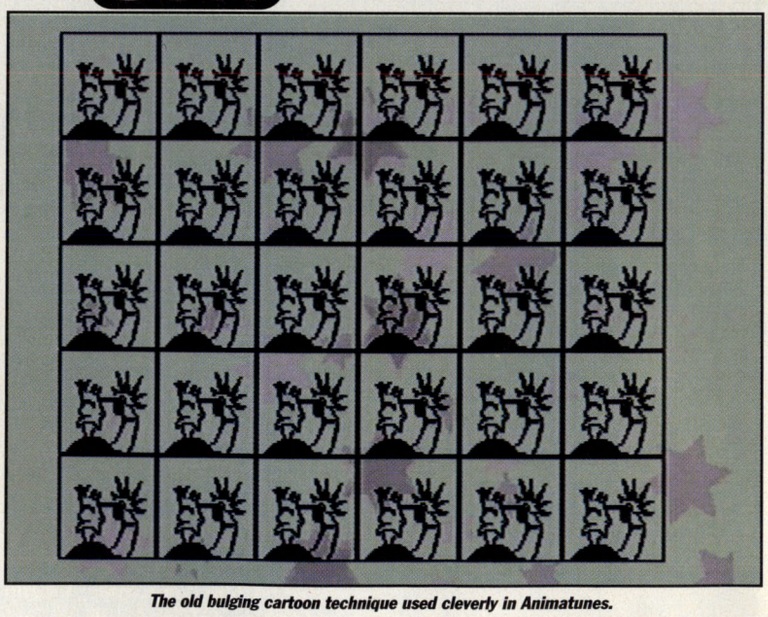
87%

AUI are intrigued by the name of this new PD company. Is it just a play on Sadness, or does it indicate a passion for the Marquis de Sade and all that interestingly implies?

The PD house continues the theme of the unexpected and unusual with a sharp and nifty demo from some French coders, Matrix.

Animatunes starts with a very impressive animation sequence of hand-drawn cartoons that warp and slide from one concept into the next. Maybe there's a point, but it's a little esoteric. The themes are easy to spot - birth, the universe and death.

After a loading break and credits list the demo continues into a tunnel effect with that wow factor. I see how they've done it - it's really no more technical than many others which grace demos, but the effect is stunning. Then the whole thing collapses into its end with an emulation of the Commodore 64 Basic V2 screen which spews garbage out from the cursor. Maybe it was meant to be something else - but who knows with these French? They may have thought it was weirdly cool. Trés chic.



The old bulging cartoon technique used cleverly in Animatunes.

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HEY! YOU THERE! YES, YOU! Are you flipping through this mag for PD at the cheapest price? Well, (he says, doing his best Derek Trotter impression, which is, incidentally, terrible) how much would you want to pay? We're not asking £5, not £3, not even a single Nugget. We're only asking 65p for 1-5 disks, 60p for 6-9, and 50p for 10 or more (pauses while many gasps arrive from the transfixed audience).

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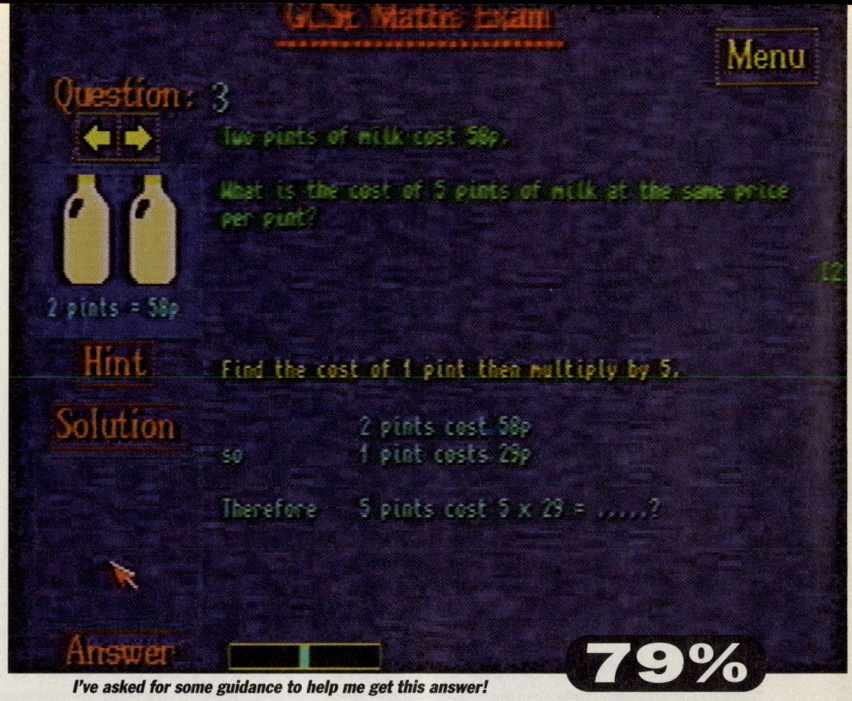
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GCSE MATHS PAPERS



I've asked for some guidance to help me get this answer!

79%

Online PD

Not too many educational programs in this month, but this one is a dandy. Should you be sitting your maths GCSE, or have a child about to sit it, this disk will prove extremely useful.

Author Thanh Quan has pulled together questions from past exam papers for you to answer. There is a helpful hints button to guide the stuck mind, and the opportunity to see a model solution.

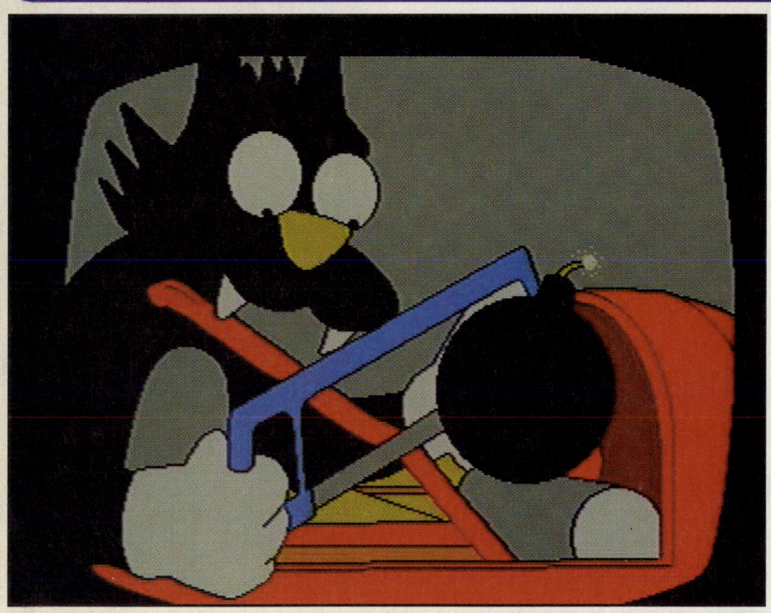
Even if the solution is requested, only the working is shown. You still have to go through the process to get the answer. This is a great feature which ensures you really do learn.

The program remembers right and wrong answers which can be saved to a database.

The full registration package (not this one) provides five more papers covering foundation, intermediate and advanced tiers, formula pages, advice on exam preparation and specifically A-level mathematics.

Very highly recommended package.

Itchy and Scratchy Show No.2



Itchy and Scratchy - appearing now on your Amiga.

Online PD

This is the second of a short series of re-renderings of the infamous Ichy and Scratchy show. The cartoon series is a cartoon within a cartoon - its short sketches parodying ultra-violent cartoon genres appear within the cult show, The Simpsons. I&S is part of the dog-eared Crusty the Clown TV show, which Bart and Lisa Simpson refuse to miss.

Pointed parody of modern American life is back in fashion in the Simpsons, after it temporarily slid into a pattern of sitcom formula dysfunctional family bliss. Someone called Chrome - Australia - have taken the I&S show's most brilliantly absurd and brutal sketches and converted them into Amiga animations.

We're not sure how they've done them - the full colour cartoons are remarkably like the "real thing". They do look to be hand-drawn copies from the original. It does sound like samples from the original soundtrack accompany the sketch. Copyright problems arise, but given the anarchic attitudes of the Simpson authors, I think they'd appreciate this homage to their work (although the suited corporate jerks who run the money-orientated TV business may not).

This particular episode, Kitty Kitty Bang Bang, sees Itchy, or is it Scratchy, the cat, in a bowling alley. The mouse appears from nowhere to stretch the cat's tongue into the bowling bowl return conveyor.

While he struggles to free his tongue, a bowling-ball like bomb is spun down the alley by the mouse. He gets a strike and the sparking bomb begins its return to where the cat is stuck.

In blind panic the cat slices at his tongue with a hacksaw to free himself. He fails. The bomb arrives and explodes.

His body tumbles in pieces to the Snack Bar, arranged in trays of cat intestines and ligaments.

The mouse rings up a sale and the cartoon finishes with two dogs munching into a tasty meal of cat.

Hilarious stuff and well worth a permanent place in your collection.

It shows off the Amiga and will get a laugh from your friends.

97%





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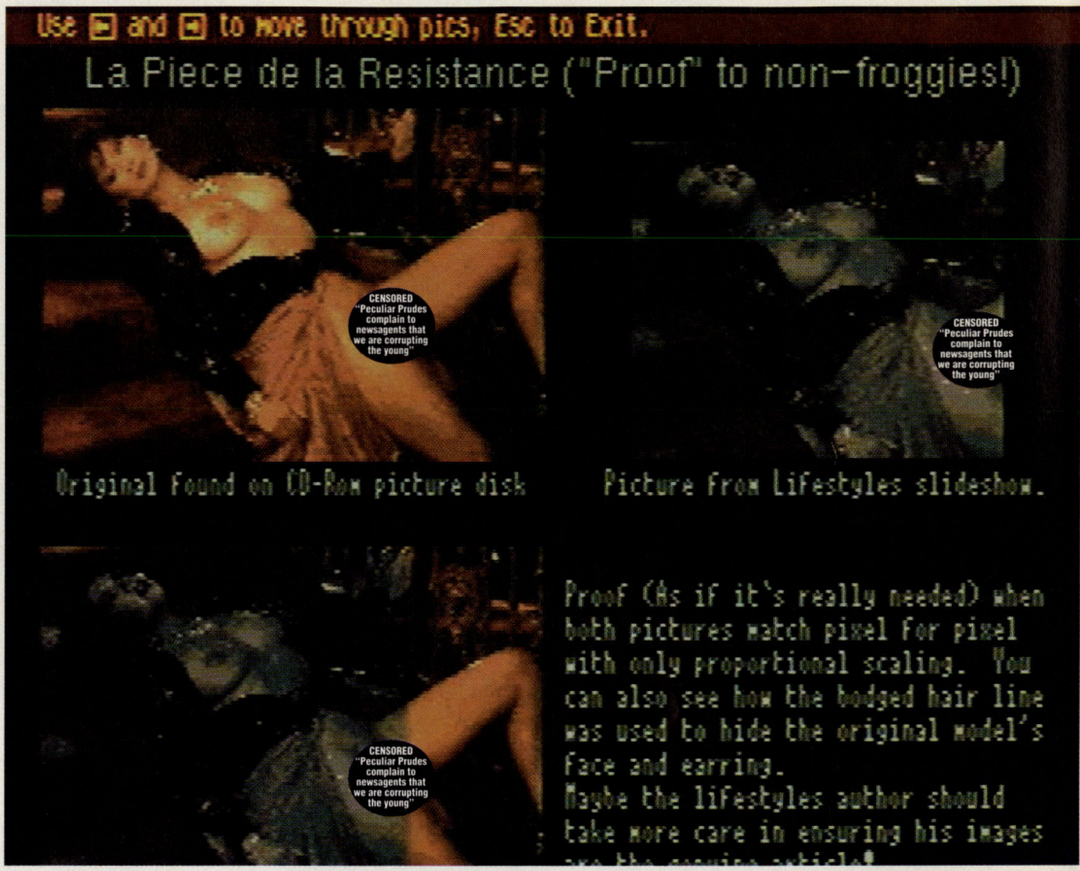
The 5th edition of this disk magazine with no particular theme is worth a good mention. Having no theme makes such a project rather risky. It means the articles have to more than make up for the loss with a readability and interest which creates a unique attitude and style.

I don't quite know how, but the disk manages to reward reading. The articles are varied in topics and skill, but are almost uniformly well written, witty, humorous and interesting.

Although the material is mainly text based, the presentation is still excellent. Smooth scrolling animation slips behind the main text and very listenable music fills the aural void.

The latest issue has the usual attacks on PCs - which should be boring and ignorant - but come across well. They, like the whole magazine, are written by people who really love the Amiga and know it intimately. The interest is kept alive with articles like that comparing the specification of the latest range of game consoles, one discussing the techniques of stamp faking, game reviews (not the strongest factor), a few dodgy video reviews and so on.

There's an interesting article on the use of computers to give Pheobe Cates the naked body of someone (If she doesn't want her own body, can we have it?).



The only real picture in The Word, but Boy! What a picture!

The well phrased opinions are not necessarily balanced or objective but are great to read. Some are complete rampant raves on one subject or another - like the one attacking the buzz for virtual reality. The idea is that you can respond with your views. They'd love it, since these disks live or die on the feedback. It's well worth a read.

81%

Pucman Worlds

Shoah PD No. G0317

Whoops. Good idea. Terrible result. Like Platman, Pucman World's has tried to take Pacman a little bit further - a worthy aim that fails.

This is Pacman in a larger world. You must know the Pacman formula by now; move the hungry yellow chomper around a maze, pick up the pebble thingies, bite the bonus pills to turn the chasing monsters into eatable feasts.

It's one of the best AMOS-programmed games we've seen in a while - very smooth and well animated. In the end though, the game isn't gripping enought. It lazes along at its own summer-time pace.

The maze in which you do this is larger than the screen. So as you move, the screen scrolls with you.

The result is that the huge maze takes a boringly long time to get around.

The monsters are plain stupid and pose no threat whatsoever.

A big miss.

68%

Fears II AGA

Online DP

What do you fear most? In 1984, Winston was terrified of rats. My biggest fear used to feeling my toes being tickled under the bedclothes.., while I was sleeping alone.

That fear has now been surpassed It is the fear of seeing yet another bloody Doom clone that is crap. There have been plenty of them lately to keep my phobias on edge.

There have been very few playable Doom clones on the Amiga. Fears was one of them. ***AUI*** was good enough to place it on SuperDisk No. 53 and 54 for you to try out.

Fears II has now emerged from the vile and slimey depths of your darkest nightmare. The whole nasty concoction is splattered across a wider screen dimension. Your heart will race at the smoother and more rapid movement. On the down-side the graphics are still terribly chunky. Weapons are stuck firmly and unrealistically in one place.

In this month's entertainment section ***AUI*** previews a commercial Doom type game - Gloom. Now this appears to be the business. Fast, tight, sharp and with a good in-game environment. If you are prepared to fork out the cash you can get this superb-looking game.

If you want to stick to PD, Fears II is the best you're going to get for the moment. For dedicated maze, blast and gore addicts, Fears II is a must.

85%

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Pro-Lottery 1.1

Kewll A1104

Balls (AGA)

Sadeness PD

Two more lottery programs this month. Last issue I asked all you coders to end this madness. There is more than enough lottery choosers out there. Enough already!

I had thought last month's lottery chooser was the ultimate - all you would need. I was just slightly mistaken.

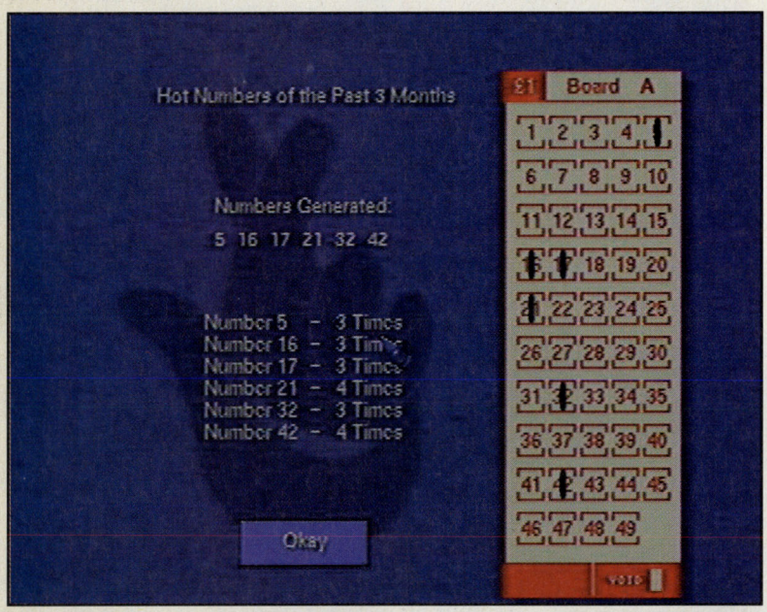
More lottery programs arrived on my desk this month, but only two were worth yapping about. After these two it will have to be a very special lottery selector that makes me mention this accursed theme again.

Now, onto these two lottery progs. The best one appears to be Balls!, although my decision was influenced by the more usable demo, it also had the best presentation and options.

Pro-lottery is still one of the few top lottery programs - it even uses the full lottery style and graphics (although I doubt it's been officially sanctioned).

The demo version will only pick a random selection of number for you. The registered version includes a prediction option, where the Amiga analyses past number performance and chooses the most likely numbers. There is also a Lucky Number facility, where your favourite numbers will be included in the choice.

Balls!, like Pro-Lottery needs your input of the actual winning numbers to keep track of number performance in a database. Balls! presents these statistics in a much better way, including bonus balls. It also allows more flexibility in the number selection - like the most frequently or least frequently chosen numbers.



Pro-Lottery 82%

Balls! 89%

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Platman

Genesis PD

Pacman has had some weird renditions since its inception in the early eighties, but this has to be one of the best PD variations on the theme.

Platman has all the usual ingredients - the jelly monsters, the hungry yellow circle chomper and lots of luscious fruit.

Author John Hardie has pulled Pacman over onto its side and turned it into a platformer. This time Mr Pacman finds himself in a frenetic search for points and door-opening keys while it winds his way through a maze of traps and puzzles.

I'm not sure what the quest is, but I don't care. Such is the rapidness and constant challenge of the game that working your way through each level is great fun in itself.

The monsters are a slight disappointment. They're not intelligent, but sway stupidly from side to side between objects. It's merely a matter of judging their movement to time your jump over them. It's still not easy, but is not so tough that it kills your enthusiasm.

The game begins with a cheeky swipe at the intro sounds of Deluxe Galaga - then its own fast paced action music takes off. This sets the pace for the following screens of sweaty joystick twiddling.

The maze environment is very well structured. Essentially the huge maze is already set out, and the screen follows your character as he munches his way around.

Although not clearly indicated in any way, eating the shimmering bulbous button will turn the monsters into eatable feasts (despite the fact that their colours won't change). This is an ideal way of clearing some problematic monsters out of your path. Once eaten, they stay eaten - at least in that section of the maze.

While the simplicity and lack of depth is obvious, I still can't resist playing this game.

78%

Shoah Utils Disk

Shoah Disk No. 503

I was impressed with the utilities provided on this disk.

Most of them I hadn't seen before, although I've been reliably informed that they aren't totally new. While it's a rather small collection - 23 utilities - most of them are truly useful, and not rubbish to make up the numbers.

You'll find an immediate use for at least a couple of them, and will no doubt need some others later. Some of the better ones are; CPU control, to alter your CPU parameters; Fake20, to make faster processors mimic the standard 1200 68020 CPU; Auto-Centre, to centre windows on an overscan monitor; 1942 SetUp for better performance on the Commodore monitor; and PS3M, a player for music modules using the S3M format (PC).

A good collection worth your interest.

84%

Shoah Games Disk

Shoah Disk No. 504

Four classic but pretty dull games in this collection. Carnage, Harrier, SizeTris and 4Wins. The latter two are small Workbench-style windows games. Harrier is the old classic. Blocky sprites, boring scrolling scenery beneath you as you bomb the hell out of the landscape.

The pride of this Shoah collection is Carnage. It doesn't live up to the name - there isn't really much carnage. There is a very well presented and executed hires two player game. You start in different parts of a hi-tech complex and chase down the corridors watching your radar, avoiding robots, picking up weaponry and bonus points, seeking out the second player. When you see him, you kill him. Simple but fun. Immensely playable. Despite Carnage, it's a mediocre collection.

70%

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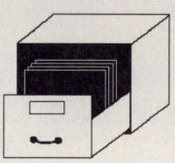
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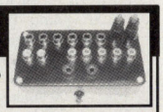
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Write to Reply

Bud Vennos is diluting his generally acid mood, he's even praising readers and appointing them as columnists! What's going wrong with him?

Dear *AUI*,
I have recently read your magazine and have noted your "The Amiga Dimension" article.

Sure the 'net carries news to the users faster than printed material, but I have to say that I don't think you should start to feel remorse at this very early stage in the 'net's development.

Even if estimates of 30 million people are correct, that's still less than half the population of the UK spread across the world using the net. Personally, I only know of one other person that is on the 'net and he uses his father's account anyway.

I am sure that you followed the accounts of the Escom/C.UK/CEI/Dell bidding on comp.sys.amiga.misc as I did and yes, the news was very up to the minute. But, and this is a big but, most of the postings where speculation. I even posted some hasty bits about the situation myself.

The world is not made up of journalists. When you go to a pub, peoplespeculate about one thing after another. The real information, information that has been stripped of speculation, is found in newspapers and mags.

A magazine such as yours will no doubt have made every possibleinvestigation into the buy out, and by the time the relevant issue hits the streets, will contain a much more succinct (sp?) breakdown of the events with proper information regarding ESCOM.

Sure it may be a bit old hat to users of the 'net, but I am sure that the vast majority of your readership are not users.

But, I don't think that you should ignore the internet factor. It is a valuable source of information, but I am sure that your jobs are, for the next couple of years, safe.

At least I will be buying your magazine for a long while yet.

Adrian
London

Dear Adrian,
You are right. The world is not made up of journalists. (Thank heaven for it too!) But some people should be columnists and you are one of them. Columnists are supposed to select an aspect of current ideas and offer the kind of comment that makes you say, "Yes, of course! Why didn't I think of that?"

The points you have made fall into that category. They shoot down the fashionable idea of the moment and, to coin a phrase, get to the heart of the matter. Even though thirty million may sound a lot of people, and I have recently read the number has gone up to forty million though where they get their estimates from is unknown, it is very small compared to the real population of this globe.

However, that thirty or forty million may well be a highly influential group - opinion formers, early adopters. They can be the people who influence the ever-hungry-for-sensation or something to sell the papers-style interest in the communications media. The media then, jumping on an apparent bandwagon, proceeds to influence the reading, listening, watching world. And then the commercial interests jump on and start making money out of it. And so more people take it up..

There is also your point about how few people we know actually use the Internet. Yes, that's true too - unless someone else is paying the telephone bills....

But perhaps the most relevant point you make in your excellent "column" is that the problem with the 'net is its "chat" nature and how most of it seems to be more like adolescent-style gossip with a good seasoning of speculation. You are right again. The Press can provide a professional, in depth, analytical approach to information and that's what it can supply even if it isn't the quickest, compared with the 'net to relay the latest news.

I say the Press CAN do that. My complaint about the computer Press in general is that too often it falls into the speculation and gossip level of journalism and so doesn't provide genuine analysis and contains a sight too much juvenile egoexpanding.

But I mustn't get onto that subject as regular readers know, when I do I wax wrathful at too great a length. But thanks for your "column", Adrian. I couldn't agree more. YOU should be a computer journo!

Dear *AUI*,
I refer to the nude photograph on page 61 of your May issue. This is supposed to be a magazine for any age group! I'm not a parent, but I'm sure that there are plenty of parents who don't want their kids subjected to this stuff. Put those kind of pictures in porno magazines where I can avoid them, not in the middle of computer magazines. When I see pictures like that I feel the tendency to get alone and masturbate, an activity which I hate, but which you make hard to avoid. Also, you could have a little more respect for women, even if they don't want it (like the model in the photo).

Don't get me wrong, I'm not anti-sex. Sex is beautiful, but only in a loving relationship between two people. I don't appreciate it when there's a score of women swimming through my imagination. I remember an article on pornography in February 94, and back then you were decent enough to keep people's private parts out of view. But now you're showing the private parts. How far do you want to go? Not only that, but your photo was totally irrelevant to the article, so why did you print it?

To let you know where I'm coming from, I'm a born-again Christian. I realise that you are not a Christian magazine, nor is this a Christian country, but I must stand up for what I believe to be the truth. Pornography is wrong because lust is wrong. It is written: "... we should not lust after evil things..." (1st Corinthians 10:6,8).

Yours sincerely

Darryl Sloan
N. Ireland

Dear Darryl,
I could say that I'm sorry we offended you but we appear not to have offended but excited you. Oh dear! Is excitement, sexual excitement wrong? You feel the dsesire to masturbate? Wow! I hate to tell you this but you are not alone in that. If you meet anyone whom tells you they haven't felt the desire or even masturbated, don't believe them.

Sexual desire is as natural as breathing. It stems from the genetic need to perpetuate the human race. Had our ancestors not felt it, and you can call it "lust" if you like, well before the strictures in the Bible were written, none of us would be here today.

Doubtless those prehistoric people went in for lustful sex, and probably masturbation too when they felt like it. But no doubt too they had lots of strange prohibitions to that today we would consider absurd. We should look carefully at the taboos of our world and not accept them because historically something has been forbidden.

Masturbation, someone said, is sex in the best company. It has its role in helping us understand our desires and in some cases it's advised to aid women find out how their men can please them as it is not unknown for some women to find it less easy to reach orgasm than their partners. (I hope I haven't shocked or excited you by that piece of agony uncle stuff!)

You're right this isn't a porno magazine but men are men and occasionally they are pleased, stimulated, excited (shame!) by the sight of of a woman's body appearing in an unexpected place. Oh I nearly wrote position, but I fear what that might do to you!. As a young woman I know used to say, looking down, in a slightly different circumstance, "Big deal!".

Don't take it all so seriously. Sex isn't beautiful but it is and

should be fun. And I'm sorry but I don't agree with you. Sex doesn't have to be in a monogamous loving relationship. It only has to be between two - or more - consenting adults. Sex and lust and masturbation happened before the biblical prohibitions and will happen long after any particular religion is forgotten - if human beings still exist.

And in any case, who said that sex was "evil things" that you say the Bible says you shouldn't lust after? Evil things are a lot worse than a sexy picture or thought or even act. Go ahead and lust a bit and stop feeling guilty. As Oscar Wilde said: "The only way to conquer temptation is to surreender to it."

Dear *AUI*,
This is the first time I've bought your magazine. I don't think any other computer magazine is as good as yours, my two SuperDisks are great. Anyway, I have an A1200 and I don't know if I should buy a CDROM or hard drive, could you help me make the decision?

Thank you

Darren Newbery
Leamington Spa

Dear Darren,
*Where have you been all our lives? The first time you have bought **AUI**? Shame on you! (I do hope you are not getting overexcited after reading **AUI** and lusting for more!),*

As for a hard drive versus a CD-ROM. That's really a question for Andy but lately I've taken to fancying myself an expert so I would say you need both. If you are getting into more serious computing, a hard drive you can't manage without. If you want to be a part of the coming multimedia revolution, a CD-ROM drive is a must.

Does that help you make a decision? No? Perhaps you should write to Profesor Andy Eskelson and his Amiga Answering Machine!

Dear *AUI*,
Have you any information on International Computer Entertainment Ltd?

I wrote them at the address I have: Bridge House, Merry Walks, Stroud, Glous. GK5 1QA and have received no reply. Has the company gone "belly-up" or been taken over?

Yours truly

Phil Townsend
London

Dear Phil,
Good old ICE run by longtime computer game stalwart Stuart Bell? We don't think they have disappeared. Why not try telephoning them? The number, which we obtained from Directory Enquiries - as you could have done - is 01453 823 023.

I'm getting good at this Answers business. I trhink I'll go in for it professionally!

No, Andy, Sorry. I didn't mean it. I'm not really after your job. Please put that computer down. Ouch!

Dear *AUI*,
First of all let me say what a big thank you to all for a brilliant magazine.

In the light of ESCOM securing the purchase of our wonderful computer system and the fact that they are opening lots of stores up and down the country. May I suggest that everybody that owns, works on or with any Commodore product, in fact, anybody who has anything to do with the Amiga system all go into these new Escom stores and continually ask that manager, when are they going to stock and start to sell the Amiga.

In the last few days I have seen full page advertisments in the National Press, and not just one page but two and three. All these advertisments are in fact for PC related products. We, the users of Amiga, must relay to the managers of this company (ESCOM) that we want to see more Amiga products in the stores as soon as possible. If some of the Amiga fraternity are prepared to make their feelings heard in the Escom stores, well maybe, we will see some Amigas in the stores much sooner than we otherwise would.

Come on you Amiga fans, now that we have a new manufacturer. Let's tell them that we have supported the Amiga in the past troubled year, so please support us now. Sooner rather than later.

Yours sincerely

David J. Thomas
Maidenhead

Dear David ,
*What a great idea! Only a reader of **AUI** could have thought of that. Once again it's simple but one of those I wish I'd thought of first*

Come, Amiga users, get into those ESCOM stores and put the pressure on. Make our wishes felt and keep at them till they give the Amiga the support we think it deserves.

Great suggestion, David.

Dear *AUI*,
First a message to Escom:

CONGRATULATIONS! THE AMIGA IS A VERY SPECIAL MACHINE AND IF YOU TREAT IT AND ITS USERS WELL, YOU WILL REAP GREAT REWARDS! There are now thousands of Amiga users chewing the bit and waiting to see if their loyalty, and almost religious faith, during the past year will be rewarded.

ESCOM tell us in their press release (28th April) that they are to continue both the A1200 and A4000 and have plans to "intergrate" the Amiga and PC operating systems. But what of the support for those thousands of us who already have machines? ESCOM seem to have a number of options:

1. Keep things ticking over with current models while they develop a whole new integrated platform. This may take years and there will still be a need to support the current users, who might look to other platforms in the meantime.

2. Release the fabled FMV compatible CD ROM drive, for A4000 users, at least, or

3. Advise people to go for the SCSI CD ROM option.

4. Release their processor upgrades. Particularly for A4000 users who have limited third party support.

5. Produce workable PC bridgeboard for the Amiga.

6. Produce an Amiga card for the PC.

These options are very relevant to all of us. If the future lies with a PC and an Amiga board, then we would all be better off either selling our machines and buying a PC or, at least, ensuring any peripherals bought could be transferred to a PC later (E.g. buying a SCSI CD ROM, and forgetting FMV compatibility).

Should ESCOM decide to develop the current Amiga platforms, there will be a need to keep the current users satisfied and reassured. Third party support for the A1200 is pretty good, but for A4000 users, support is paricularly lacking. Options might include support for various upgrades such as faster CPU boards. Parts availability is of paramount importance. (I cannot get a revision 11 buster chip for love or money!) A more reasonale price for Zorro equipped machines, would expand the user base and therefore increase demand and might lower prices for Zorro cards.

PC compatibility is, like it or not, a desireable step. The Amiga operating system is undoubtedly superior to Windows (I use both) and only deficient by virtue of the limited business software that uses it, and the limited options for networking.

However, PCs are a fact of life. Escom could pursue three different paths: Current Amiga software companies could be encouraged to include import/ export options for all the standard PC business file formats for word processors, spreadsheets and the like, allowing work to proceed freely on either platform, and network intergration could be developed such that an Amiga could be easily placed on a network with PCs.

Alternatively, a cut down bridgeboard might allow AmigaDOS access to PC expansion cards on the A4000 (as was allowed on the Golden Gate cards) without necessarily setting up full PC "emulation". Lastly, full PC cards could be released on a Zorro board. Past limitations for this option included the speed with which the display could be re-hashed to an Amiga compatible format and the cost of developing a board before the processor became outdated, but the wide range of display options on the Amiga now encompasses the standard PC displays and should require less processing, and if PC motherboards can be made "pentium compatible", then so can bridgeboards!

I have an Amiga A4000/'030, having bought one of the first to be produced, upgrading, from a A500+, past the A1200 as I wanted to have the advantages of the faster processor and Zorro slots for future expansion, "upgradeability" and the option of a PC bridgeboard. However, even with the '030, the machine is frequently running flat out when I am using graphics programs and large spreadsheets and bridgeboards are expensive "gold dust" items.

Regarding the "expandability", prices for Zorro cards remain generally high, presumably because of a limited user base and my intention of using the slots for a digitiser, genlock, etc. have not been realised: An external digitiser for the A1200 costs far less than any Zorro card available and without spending a few hundred on a graphics card (E.g. Picasso + Pablo encoder), there is no way of fitting a genlock to the A4000 without it locking the Amiga display to the 15kHz PAL frquency. As I would only use a genlock from time to time, and I mostly use a Productivity display through a Microvitec monitor, this would entail physically connecting and disconnecting the genlock from the monitor port, a task that is, at least, undesireable!

For an A1200, I could buy a 50Mhz '030 processor with MMU (Blizzard), 4Mb extra memory and a CD-ROM drive (Power: includes Squirrel interface) for under £600. To achieve the same spec. on my standard A4000, I would have to buy a SCSI interface, the CD drive, a Blizzard 4030 card (includes MMU) and a further 2Mb memory, altogether costing around £580.

At first glance, this seems balanced, but clearly there has

write to reply

continued

been NO advantage in spending the extra bucks on an A4000. In short, I see all my A1200 owning colleagues sniggering at my A4000 while they quietly spend the £500 they saved, accelerating and expanding their machines beyond mine, and I have to spend the same or even more just to keep up!

In view of the above, would you advise that I buy a SCSI CD ROM for my A4000 or should I wait and see what ESCON announce. Perhaps I should forget the A4000, sell it and buy an A1200, CD ROM and Accelerator with the cash. I could always add Zorro slots via the Ramiga Z5 box later. Or maybe I should buy a PC.....?!

What do you think I should do?

Yours sincerely

Kevin Mulcahy
Leicester

Dear Kevin,
YOU - obviously an expert - are asking ME? I am not Andy Eskelson - yes, Andy I admit it and PLEASE do not pick up that computer again! Sit down with Prof. Eskelson and chew the rag about Zorro boards and the rest. I am just the moral conscience of the computer world not its technosoul.

*But though my ignorance is known throughout the computer universe, I can appreciate what you say. There are dilemmas facing ESCOM and the rest of us too. The opening pages of this **AUI** cover some of the questions that ESCOM has to answer and all of us will listen.*

No doubt as the months pass we shall see ESCOM making up its mind, because it all seems pretty off the cuff stuff up to now, and we can better decide whether we think they are going in the right direction and deserve our support.

They don't seem bad guys from what one reads. After all many of them worked for Commodore back in the (somewhat) good old days. Give them a bit of time to settle in before taking any hasty decision.

Dear *AUI*,
It is very irritating when reading through your otherwise excellent PD section that the price of the disk is not put with the article about it. Some of the PD firms do not advertise in your magazine and it is annoying to have to search through other magazines looking for an advert in order to find the price before actually being able to order what is wanted. Surely it must be possible to include this price information in the article - or next to the address list.

Yours sincerely

David A. Patterson
S. Humberside

Dear David,
*I have consulted Gideon Overhead, sometime PD Expert-in-residence at **AUI** and he thinks your suggestion is a very sensible one. As of the next issue we will endeavour to include prices in The PD Stakeout.*

We certainly don't want you to have to undergo the terrible experience of looking through other magazines. Sickness, pain and blindness and even impotence may follow. (I emphasise this has nothing to do with lust and hair on the palms of the hand. It's just ine of life's unfortunate mishaps.) Indeed we would never put any of our readers to that awful fate. Watch for PD prices, they should be coming your way soon.

Dear *AUI*,
Brilliant, is the only way to descibe the latest issue of *AUI* (June '95)!!

The collection of programs on the cover disks quite the best yet on yours, or I venture to suggest, on any other Amiga magazine to date.

The coverage of the latest "HiQ" products also a `must read', and the family business, which "HiQ" is; yet another example of the loyalty to our common (should I say uncommon) user-friendly computer the trusty Amiga!

That I own a "Power Station", does not mean an automatic `hipe' for the system, but I have to place on record, as one who was not `reared' on computers, just how helpful Steve Jones and his family are, and continue to be, in getting things right on the product.

So it has high-end potential, but can be an invaluable 'add-on', to other 'not so high' users!

No comment or reply to this note is either solicited or expected, I just felt this was one occasion when I had to make a reader's appraisal of a professional job well executed, something one expects of *AUI* but not always given due credit, by diverse contributors to your 'Write to Reply' columns.

Yours sincerely

Frank G. Doswell
Crawley, W, Sussex

Dear Frank,
It's always good to hear a supplier praised. We well know Steve Jones of HIQ here, Believe it or not, this text is being keyed in on a 1500 produced by Steve Jones' company yonks ago. That is an original 1500 not the copycat 1500 produced by Commodore.

Thanks for the "testimonial" we always like to hear good things about those who deserve it.

***AUI*,**
I am writing to say how disappointed I am with Mark Blackham's article "Papering over the Cracks". Having got a Canon BJC-600 and Studio II, I am always on the lookout for ways of improving my output.

He defines DPI as "Dots per Square Inch" - very confusing for newcomers - and he states that a ream is "around 250 sheets" - a ream is not "around" anything, it's 500.

Now the main point. I got the strong message from this article that Tervakoski 4CC paper is just about the best one can get. So I got some of the paper and while I would agree that it is a very good paper, the results don't bear comparison with what you get from my Plus Colour Jet coated paper (which is admittedly a lot more expensive - but cost wasn't mentioned in the article). The Plus paper is a lot whiter and the results (both black and colour) beat the Tervakoski by a mile. The article dropped well below the standard I now expect from *AUI*.

PS. *AUI* is to review DPaint5 - may I ask you to give your views on the fact that it still can only import IFF images? These days there's so much available in other formats and it's a real pain to have to use ImageStudio or SuperView just to convert the format. If Wordworth can import PCX, BMP, GIF, CGM, EPS etc then I think DPaint should too. But I mustn't try to influence your opinions must I?!!

M.S. Grieve,
Cumbria

Dear M.S. Grieve
Thank you for your comments.

It worries me that you wrote off a complete article, which would have helped many people, on the basis of two perceived mistakes.

Regarding the first, DPI. There is no other way of defining the abbreviation. I did provide a description of what the dots were doing in every square inch - there was even a diagram.

The ream question. Oh how the world is a simple one to those who think simply. Technically I was incorrect. A ream is 500 sheets. A Printers Ream is 516 sheets. Because it was not designed as a highly technical article I was referring to the sense in which these once specific meanings have broken down.

The availability of paper on a retail basis to the general public has redefined the term "ream". Informal use of "ream" tends to refer to any large bundle of paper. You will notice that these bundles come in anything from 75, 100, 250 to 500 sheets - depending on the weight of the paper and the price point sought by the manufacturer.

To make bundles of paper accessible to the average punter in terms of what they need and the price, many manufacturers have cut down the ream size.

Now, regarding my review of the Tervakoski paper itself. You should be aware that much expressed in reviews is personal opinion. You feel that your paper is better. Then that's what you should use.

You admit the Tervakoski is a very good paper. It is, and that is all I said. You cannot get much better in this style, for the price, and with the level of research behind it. The paper is also, unlike your paper, uncoated. That, for a number of reasons explained in the article, is preferable for high output, high level digital technology printers.

Thank you again for your points, we always appreciate the fact that our readers are keeping a check on us! *Mark Blackham*

Send your letters to: Write to Reply
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New *A1200xl* Due August

'*xl*' twice as powerful as *A4000-030!*

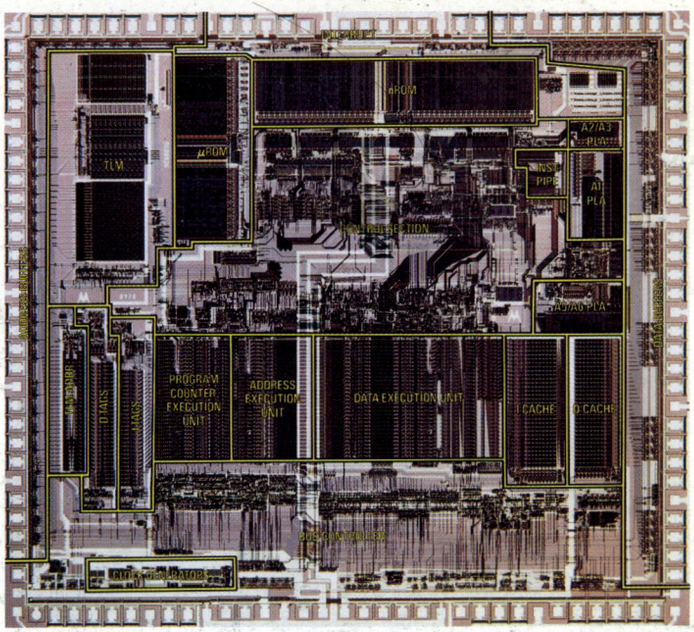
The new *A1200xl*, due August is an exciting and much needed development in the Amiga market.

Two Models

The two models of the '*xl*' as it's known to its close friends, boasts the full monty Motorola 68030 set (MMU+Cache+FPU) running at 33 and 50MHz respectively with upto 64 Megabytes of memory and a **choice** of two hard drive interfaces; ATA-IDE-wide (New High-performance IDE) and SCSI-2wide, the 50MHz model is twice as powerful as the ***A4000-030***!

A1200xl tech specs

CPU:	• Motorola 68030 @ 33/**50MHz (9.5 MIPS)** • On-chip cache's
Co-processing:	• Motorola Floating Point Unit 68882 @ 33/**50MHz (1.25 MFLOPS)** • MMU for Virtual Memory
Memory:	Expandable to **64MB** of RAM
HD Options:	• ATA-IDE-wide (at least **5MB/s+**) • SCSI-2-wide (at least **5MB/s+**)
Installation:	A1200 internal upgrade
Release:	In shops early August '95
Price:	£200-£300



The A1200xl is based on Motorol's 68030/68882 set and at 50MHz is twice-as-fast as the A4000-030

Boost for Lightwave users

Even the 33MHz model is 33% faster than the ***A4000-030*** which is a great improvement over the basic ***A1200*** .

The addition of a maths co-pro will be a massive boost for Lightwave users, enabling rendering to be done in only a fraction of the time it usually takes.

Dual HD interfaces

The two hard disc interfaces is a brilliant surprise giving you the freedom of ATA-IDE-wide and SCSI-2-wide, both have extremely high performance transfer rates (see tech specs below).

As soon as we get are hands on one, reset assured it will be reviewed in a future issue of ***AUI***.